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Official Records

Fiftieth Session

71st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 28 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda items 20 and 154 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/203-E/1995/79 and Add.1)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/50/286-E/1995/113, A/50/292-E/1995/115, A/50/301, A/50/311, A/50/423, A/50/424, A/50/447, A/50/455, A/50/464, A/50/506, A/50/522, A/50/534, A/50/654 and A/50/763)

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/50/743)

Draft resolutions (A/50/L.27, A/50/L.29, A/50/L.30, A/50/L.31, A/50/L.32, A/50/L.33)

(c) Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/418)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.26)

Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Note by the Secretariat (A/50/542)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.23)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): In connection with sub-item (b) of agenda item 20, the Assembly has before it draft resolution A/50/L.33, "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti".

I should like again to remind members that, as announced at yesterday's meeting, the Assembly has deferred to a later date, to be announced, consideration of two aspects of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20, namely, those concerning the special emergency assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of Burundi, and the international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia,

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as well as sub-item (d) of agenda item 20, concerning emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan.

I now call upon the representative of Djibouti to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.33.

Mr. Dorani (Djibouti) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the delegation of Djibouti, I should like to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.33, "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti".

As members will note, this year's updated draft resolution is designed to deal with the current situation in our country. Although its format is no different from that of resolution 49/21 F of 20 December 1994, adopted at last year's session of the General Assembly, its aim is to be pragmatic and effective.

The preamble of the draft resolution notes the economic and social difficulties in my country created by natural disasters, such as floods and cyclical droughts, as well as by such external factors as the prolonged effects of previous regional conflicts, notably in Somalia, which have made the task of the State more difficult owing to the large number of refugees and displaced persons on its territory and which have also disrupted services, transport and trade, draining the State of most of its revenues.

To remedy the situation, the draft resolution notes with satisfaction that the Government of Djibouti has approved the structural adjustment programme presented by the International Monetary Fund and expresses the conviction that the donor community will take effective measures to assist Djibouti to continue the policy that is in the course of implementation.

The draft resolution also notes with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations Inter-Agency Assessment Mission to Djibouti organized in April 1994 and led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and it requests the Mission to reformulate its recommendations. It notes with gratitude the support provided by all who have helped and are currently helping Djibouti.

In its operative part, the draft resolution takes up the points I have mentioned and expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to make the international community aware of the difficulties faced by Djibouti.

In conclusion, we believe this to be a well-balanced draft resolution that will surely enjoy the support of all.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, and to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for their efforts over the past year in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance. The Secretary-General also deserves our thanks for his useful reports on the subject.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, like other Member States, is greatly concerned over the increasing number and growing magnitude of humanitarian emergencies, which include natural as well as man-made disasters. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, in 1960 there were 1.4 million refugees globally; by 1985 the figure had risen to 11.6 million; and, currently, there are about 25 to 30 million persons who are internally displaced and in need of assistance from the international community.

These numbers of people are in addition to the many others who suffer tremendously in natural disasters. These circumstances clearly demonstrate the need for more effective and coordinated responses by the international community to disaster conditions. In this regard, we believe that the efficient, proportionate and timely provision of humanitarian assistance, while being extremely useful to mitigate the negative impacts of disaster, is not an end in itself. Natural disasters create additional pressure on the economies of the developing countries, retarding their social and economic strides towards achieving sustainable development. While countries should be encouraged to incorporate natural-disaster reduction measures in their development plans, humanitarian assistance should also be directed at addressing the underlying causes that make territories and countries vulnerable when facing natural disasters. This constitutes a renewed emphasis on an important principle of the Yokohama strategy — namely, the continuum from relief to development.

As also pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, and as implied by present situations in some countries, sanctions can create major hardship ramifications for civilians. Therefore, there is a need for clear prior assessment of the likely impact of sanctions, including how they might affect humanitarian considerations.

My delegation attaches great importance to effective coordination between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and various agencies, such as the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In this regard, we consider useful the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee contained in the Secretary-General's report. However, regarding coordination at the field level, my delegation reiterates its position in support of General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the responsibility in the field for humanitarian work has been clearly entrusted to the UNDP resident coordinator. The designation or appointment of a humanitarian coordinator in exceptionally complex emergency circumstances should be thoroughly studied and examined on the basis of the individual merit of each case and the gravity of the particular situation.

In general, the guide for the Department's activities should be General Assembly resolution 46/182, which clearly spells out the precepts for humanitarian assistance. These include the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, full respect for sovereignty, consent of the affected countries and full consultation and coordination with the national authorities. Furthermore, I should like to emphasize the importance of the provisions of paragraph 27 of General Assembly resolution 48/42, which calls for full consultation with the emergency relief coordinator in the overall planning of a peace-keeping operation with a humanitarian component.

Shortfalls in financial resources continue to imperil the implementation of many humanitarian programmes. Given the recent increase in the number and complexity of emergencies to which the United Nations system has been called upon to respond, it has become all the more necessary to provide adequate resources for increasing the capacity of United Nations humanitarian organizations so that the system can respond quickly and effectively to the wide range of critical short- and medium-term needs of those affected by natural disasters and emergencies. In this regard, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) has served as a predominant source of funding for United Nations agencies, in the critical initial phase of emergencies, to supplement the emergency funding capacities of these organizations. Despite the Fund's effectiveness, however, the resources available in it constitute a matter of serious concern, as acknowledged by the General Assembly in resolution 49/139 A, where it noted the need to increase the resources available in the CERF and to ensure that it maintains an adequate level at all times to respond to new emergencies.

While the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should continue to be the prime catalytic mechanism for the promotion and implementation of these strategies, it should also seek and support effective regional coordination mechanisms. This process, while putting emphasis on coordination at a regional level, entails the interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral interaction of all parties. Evidently, the first and most important step in this regard would be to identify the regional disaster-reduction and prevention potentials and to make use of them. Only when adequate disaster-reduction assistance items and authority are entrusted to these regional centres can one be assured that the United Nations system will react efficiently and in a timely fashion.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its commitment to United Nations humanitarian assistance, as mandated in General Assembly resolutions, taking into account the principles I have underlined.

Mr. Ntonga (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank you most sincerely, Mr. Acting President, for giving my delegation the opportunity to state the views of my country, Cameroon, on the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 154, entitled "Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

I note with pleasure that our task has been made easier by the wealth, clarity and accuracy of the information contained in the working documents submitted to us, in particular the report (A/50/203/Add.1) of the Secretary-General and the note (A/50/542) by the Secretariat. These documents describe how this item has evolved since the adoption on 20 December 1994 of resolution 49/139 B at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

We would like to express to the Secretary-General our satisfaction at the work accomplished.

Approved by the aforementioned resolution 49/139 B, which was adopted by consensus, the initiative on participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", has fine prospects. Indeed, because of its purposes, the initiative continues to enjoy the strong support of many

Governments, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations.

This excellent initiative — for which the Argentine Republic should be commended — seeks to create national volunteer corps of men and women of good will to strengthen national and regional stand-by arrangements to enable them to participate in United Nations activities in the field of humanitarian emergency assistance and to promote a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

As paragraph 4 of the Note by the Secretariat states, the Economic and Social Council at its 1995 substantive session demonstrated strong support for the early implementation of the "White Helmets" initiative, which it considered to be technically viable. Furthermore, the initiative was also mentioned and approved in the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March 1995. Finally, according to the Secretary-General's report, several Governments have declared their readiness to cooperate in its immediate implementation or to play a role in training these national volunteer corps.

Cameroon is open to any approach and is ready to implement any initiative that can strengthen international cooperation, which is a factor for peace and development. Cameroon cannot fail to lend its full support to the "White Helmets" initiative, the aims of which are the same as those that motivate and underpin my Government's activities at the national and international levels.

Indeed, given the presence and the flow of refugees and displaced persons on our territory, and aware of the importance of international solidarity — which was manifest during the ecological catastrophe at Lake Nyos in Cameroon in 1986 — and of the need to confront unpredictable situations in an uncertain future, my Government decided to establish within Cameroon's armed forces a specialized unit for peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance operations. This specialized unit, although part of our armed forces, will include a multidisciplinary civilian component devoted to humanitarian assistance operations.

At the international level, and particularly the subregional levels, the 11 States members of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions of the Members States of the Central African Sub-Region have undertaken to participate in peace-keeping operations under the aegis of the United Nations or the Organization of African Unity and to that end to establish within their armed forces specialized units for peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance operations.

Finally, as proof of the importance we attach to this question, a training seminar for trainers in peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance operations will be held in Yaoundé during the first half of 1996. In this respect, my delegation reiterates Cameroon's eagerness and availability to organize a yearly training course in Yaoundé for all African countries.

Without prejudice to any statement my Government may make on this subject in the future, my delegation shares the views expressed in paragraphs 26, 28, 38, 40 and 41 of the Secretary-General's report, dealing respectively with areas of possible utilization of national volunteers, coordination arrangements between the United Nations and the countries concerned for the effective implementation of the initiative, and the training programme for and status and security of "White Helmets".

As to financing, my delegation takes careful note of the comment in the report that:

> "The viability of the "White Helmets" initiative is ultimately predicated on the availability of financing for their training and deployment". (*A/50/203/Add.1, para. 29*)

Given the role that national volunteers are being asked to play in the various stages of peace-keeping operations, particularly at the peace-building stage, it would therefore appear necessary, as suggested in paragraph 30 of the report, that financial resources be found through the fund-raising envisaged by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

In my delegation's opinion, the financial support of the United Nations and additional contributions from Member States, particularly the wealthier ones, are essential for the effective launching of this initiative. Because of the difficulties it is facing, Cameroon would like to benefit from this financial support for the training and deployment of national volunteers to be selected and integrated into the specialized unit for peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance operations.

In conclusion, I reiterate my Government's support for the "White Helmets" initiative, which meets the objectives defined by "An Agenda for Peace" and which,

in its operational phase, will strengthen the essential and highly appreciated activities of the Blue Helmets, United Nations volunteers and other intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions which have been working tirelessly for decades to attain the same goals.

For all these reasons, Cameroon wishes to join the list of cosponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.23, which it hopes will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Kamunanwire (Uganda): My delegation supports the statement made by the representative of the Philippines, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/50/203 on "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations" as well as his other reports on special economic assistance to individual countries.

First, the important role played by humanitarian and disaster relief assistance cannot be underestimated. However, for it to be effective, it should be well coordinated, timely and of the right magnitude, so that it efficiently addresses the immediate needs of victims.

Secondly, emergency relief assistance should not be an end in itself. Besides addressing the immediate needs, special focus should also be devoted to the root causes of crisis situations. Take the example of internal conflicts which, among other things, result in the influx of refugees and the internal displacement of persons. As long as those conflicts persist, the situation is not conducive to the voluntary return of the victims and so the burden on both the receiving parties and the suffering communities is perpetuated. It thus becomes imperative that efforts be redoubled and resources be mobilized to address the underlying factors in crisis situations.

Thirdly, emergency and disaster relief assistance should be designed and undertaken in such a way that it is not for ever. Besides evolving durable solutions, affected countries should be assisted in building the necessary capacities and economic capabilities that would enable them to mitigate any future recurrences. In particular, on the issue of emergency assistance versus development assistance, it is the view of my delegation that while attention should be given to emergency assistance, this should not be at the expense of development assistance. Inasmuch as emergency situations call for urgent responses, by nature they are not perpetual and should therefore not unduly affect resources for development. To a very large extent, the ultimate solution to the ills and eventualities of today lies in the precepts of economic development and the soundness of economies.

My country is among those countries that evoked Article 50 of the Charter as a result of economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Since then, an expensive road project contracted to a Yugoslav company called Energoprojekt remains stalled half-way in addition to all associated encumbrances over the last five years.

Unfortunately, in the case of Uganda, all the previous resolutions adopted by the Assembly on special economic assistance to affected States as a result of the sanctions remain unimplemented, which calls into question the whole essence and spirit of Article 50. The balance-of-payments support by the International Monetary Fund, mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (A/50/423) addressed other pressing areas and not any mitigation as a result of the sanctions. It is our hope that the Security Council Committee on Yugoslavia will find it appropriate to address the damage so far accumulated in the spirit of Article 50 of the Charter.

Mr. Bull (Liberia): The Liberian delegation is pleased to participate in the Assembly's consideration of agenda item 20 (b), on "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions".

We offer our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his analytical and informative report entitled "Assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia", contained in document A/50/522 of 9 October 1995, which my delegation fully endorses. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs also deserves our gratitude for its diligence in sensitizing the international community to the continuing needs of the Liberian people ravaged by war.

The recent Conference on Assistance to Liberia, held in New York on 27 October 1995, is a further manifestation of the determination of the Secretary-General to obtain the active involvement of the international community in providing much needed resources for Liberia's rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. We express an appeal that those who made pledges during that meeting will shortly fulfil their

commitments, which are vital to the successful implementation of the Liberian peace process.

When the Head of the Liberian delegation to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly addressed this body on 9 October, he conveyed to the donor community the appreciation of the Government and people of Liberia for their valuable support and assistance to the country. Today, we should like to reiterate those sentiments to the international community for its continued cooperation and support.

The persistent deadlock which characterized negotiations in the Liberian peace process during nearly six years of war has now been replaced by a firm commitment to peace. As the Assembly is aware, this was realized through the signing of the Abuja Agreement on 19 August 1995 by the leaders of the various factions and their subsequent participation in a six-man Council of State. The Council's responsibilities include the disarming and demobilization of combatants, the repatriation of Liberian refugees and their resettlement, and the holding of internationally supervised executive and legislative elections on 20 August 1996.

As Liberians embrace peace, we remain grateful to the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly Nigeria and Ghana, for their tireless efforts which contributed to the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. The contributions of the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, the Organization of African Unity, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also deserve our commendation.

The new transitional leadership which assumed office on 1 September 1995 is determined to fulfil its mandate pursuant to the Abuja Agreement. Already, the three branches of government have been duly constituted and are performing their respective duties. The Government has held bilateral talks with the neighbouring States of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone concerning the peace process and the coordination of plans for the repatriation of more than 800,000 Liberian refugees residing in those countries. The Transitional Government is also endeavouring to extend its authority throughout the country; however, this activity is directly dependent on the deployment of the ECOWAS Peace Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

Unfortunately, the appeals for support for ECOMOG by the Secretary-General and the Security Council have not sufficiently satisfied the logistical and other requirements for ECOMOG's full deployment. This situation could adversely affect the important gains made so far by the Liberian parties.

This delegation has always advocated that as Liberia emerges from a state of war emphasis should shift from relief to capacity-building as one of the means of encouraging development activities in the country. There must be a "continuum from relief to development" if the goals of sustainable development, including the restoration of productive capacities in Liberia, are to be achieved. We are therefore pleased that the Secretary-General's report on Liberia has identified several sectoral programmes — health and medical care, food and nutrition, education and training, agriculture and forestry, and water supply, among others - that are receiving assistance in an effort to help build the capacities of the Liberian authorities in assuming responsibility for the recovery process.

During the pledging conference on assistance to Liberia, the Transitional Government issued a complementary appeal document that identified several sectoral programmes, as well as those for the reintegration of ex-combatants and the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, as requiring priority assistance. My Government believes that providing assistance to these areas will lay the foundation for sustainable peace and help to facilitate the rebuilding of the country.

In this connection, we wish to reiterate the request for assistance made by the Secretary-General for the programmes identified in his report and for those presented by the Transitional Government during the pledging conference.

We are heartened by the Secretary-General's decision to visit Liberia on 30 November to identify with the Liberian people and to personally assess the progress made so far in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, widely acknowledged as the last hope for peace in Liberia. The Government and people of Liberia consider the visit timely, particularly since it will be on the eve of the commencement of the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, pursuant to the Abuja Agreement. The Secretary-General's visit will be a tremendous source of encouragement to the Liberian people and a clear indication of his commitment and that of the international community to the attainment of lasting peace in Liberia.

Since the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Liberian delegation, through the African Group, has proposed a draft resolution requesting assistance for Liberia. This year's draft resolution, contained in document A/50/L.27, highlights the very encouraging developments in the country and the areas of priority need. We therefore request that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus, as similar draft resolutions have been in the past.

The Liberian peace process has entered a critical phase. While we are mindful that the primary responsibility for maintaining peace rests with the Liberian people, it is our fervent hope that the international community will continue to lend its support to our efforts to achieve sustained peace and democratic governance in Liberia.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): It is with great pleasure that I take part in today's discussion on the field of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

At the outset, I should like to express our gratitude to the courageous individuals working in the humanitarian aid community, who have dedicated their lives to disaster assistance. We pay special tribute to the United Nations departments and agencies, which have, in the face of various constraints, achieved substantial progress in successfully harmonizing and channelling the efforts of the international community in the field of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance.

When we speak of the United Nations efforts in the field of relief assistance, the primary role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs cannot be overemphasized. At the same time, we would like to recognize the valuable contributions of other United Nations agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), for their vigorous initiatives and efforts in this field.

Furthermore, my delegation would like to note the usefulness and effectiveness of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, in which non-governmental organizations participate; the operation of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, which facilitates a timely response to emergencies; and the consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeals process, which advances cooperation and coordination between relevant United Nations agencies.

In this vein, my delegation would like to comment on some points related to the coordination mechanism in the United Nations system.

First, we are of the view that effective coordination should be based on a clear mandate, which would be supported by the clear division of labour in the United Nations system. At present, there are still overlapping or duplicative mandates and responsibilities among the relevant United Nations agencies engaged in emergency humanitarian assistance. This overlap is partly attributable to the urgent nature of a situation that requires a rapid response or to the intrinsic nature of humanitarian assistance, which entails a continuum from immediate relief to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development. Bearing in mind these problems, my delegation calls for greater efforts and investment to be made to streamline and rationalize the effective division of labour among various United Nations agencies.

Secondly, a regular consultation mechanism should be formalized and given further substance in order to strengthen coordination between relevant United Nations agencies. We would like to suggest the further utilization of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

By the same token, we believe that greater consultative mechanisms are needed to facilitate and further improve the relationship between the United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. Such mechanisms will surely contribute to streamlining the process of interlinking humanitarian assistance and mid- or long-term development programmes. My delegation would like to note the usefulness of the development programme, which will eventually buttress the stable and sustainable foundation for the objective of overall humanitarian assistance by assisting indigenous capacity-building.

Thirdly, it is our view that heightened attention should be given to promotion of the participation and maximum utilization of the private sector, including non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and international levels. In its efforts to assist Rwanda and Somalia, my Government has witnessed firsthand the benefits of mobilizing the private sector. Among the major factors which have contributed to the success of the mobilization are the mass media, which provide on-

the-spot coverage of a given emergency situation. My delegation considers that the effective mobilization and utilization of the private sector and mass media would contribute significantly to the easing of the capacity and resource problems which the international community is now facing in the field of humanitarian assistance.

In this connection, we would like to support the maximum possible utilization of the "White Helmet" initiative in the field of relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development. My delegation believes that it is important to highlight the volunteer spirit of service and partnership, which can play a vital role in bringing about global support through public action and cross-national campaigns. We therefore support and are co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the initiative.

Fourthly, my delegation calls on the international community to take every possible measure to ensure the security and safety of those individuals who are engaged in humanitarian assistance activities. My delegation condemns actions such as taking humanitarian assistance workers hostage as a means to achieve political or military objectives. Furthermore, as recommended in the Secretary-General's report, it is incumbent upon all Member States to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law by taking appropriate action against those who violate fundamental humanitarian norms.

Finally, in view of the importance of early warning and preparedness in preventing and mitigating natural disaster, my delegation would like to support the strengthening of the relationship between various actors, including the relevant United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Given that humanitarian relief assistance and peace-keeping activities are inseparably interlinked and mutually reinforcing, it is critical for peace-keeping operations and humanitarian relief assistance to keep each other fully abreast of the other's activities in all phases of emergency situations. In this light, I would like to draw attention to the necessity for close cooperation and coordination between relevant departments of the United Nations, such as the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. Cooperation and coordination between the three departments is integral to enhancing the effectiveness of current emergency humanitarian relief assistance.

With particular reference to the Note by the Secretary-General (A/50/572) transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Investigation of the relationship between humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations" (JIU/REP/95/6), my delegation would like to request the Secretary-General to take substantive and detailed action for the further enhancement of coordination between the relevant departments.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the Republic of Korea's firm commitment to the cause of international humanitarian relief assistance and to the efforts being made.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): Both in number and in scale, the humanitarian crises that have beset the world in the past few years have been unprecedented. In Iraq, Somalia, the Great Lakes region, and the former Yugoslavia, the international community has laboured to provide assistance under the most difficult conditions, and in my opinion it has acquitted itself well. Humanitarian and other organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system, have shown tremendous courage and determination, and they have succeeded to a surprising degree in relieving human misery. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to pay tribute to every individual involved in those efforts.

The crises we have weathered and the manner in which we have done so, however, have highlighted the urgency of strengthening our emergency response capability. Since humanitarian organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have expertise on which we should continue to draw, this can be done in large part by improving coordination and cooperation between them. My delegation therefore welcomes and supports the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council last July urging the governing bodies of humanitarian organizations of the United Nations system to review those issues which relate to the role and operational responsibilities as well as the operative and financial capabilities of their respective organizations. It is our hope that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will play a central role in following up this resolution by convening regular, informal, and open informational meetings, so as to ensure that this review progresses at a proper pace.

My delegation also would like to see the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) reinforce its function as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination under the Emergency Relief Coordinator. In accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly on this subject in recent years, IASC should convene frequent meetings to deal with administrative, technical, and policy issues. Specifically, it should consider such matters as the response to complex emergencies, treatment of internally displaced persons, a funding strategy for humanitarian activities, the safety of humanitarian assistance personnel, and the "continuum". In this connection, my delegation welcomes the initiative taken by IASC in developing the procedures for the selection and appointment of regional humanitarian coordinators, which has led to the appointments of humanitarian coordinators in Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Somalia. It is the belief of my delegation that the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities at the field level can be carried out most effectively by a regional humanitarian coordinator who is designated from among the most qualified persons representing the various humanitarian agencies involved in a given situation.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, which it read with great interest. Japan shares the Secretary-General's concern about the safety of personnel engaged in humanitarian assistance activities. Last year, at its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel in order to ensure the smooth implementation of United Nations activities. I appeal to all other Member States to accept the Convention as quickly as possible, as Japan did in July of this year, as the second signatory. It is, however, to be noted that the Convention does not automatically cover humanitarian assistance activities. According to article 1 (*c*), it applies to those operations whose purpose is the maintenance or restoration of international peace and security, and to those where the Security Council or the General Assembly has declared for the purposes of the Convention that there exists an exceptional risk to the safety of participating personnel. Because my delegation believes that it is vital that the Convention be applied as widely as possible and that it extend in particular to personnel engaged in providing humanitarian assistance, we would like to propose that the Security Council or the General Assembly make the declaration of an "exceptional risk" more automatic and customary.

In his report, the Secretary-General also points out the importance of rehabilitation and confidence-building measures in a post-conflict period, and recommends that a separate window with an additional $30 million be opened within the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to act as a catalyst for such activities. My delegation agrees that there must be a smooth transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. However, this is very much a part of the development process, and could be implemented more effectively by international development organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, given their expertise and the resources at their disposal. It is therefore essential to establish close cooperative relations between humanitarian organizations and such development agencies so that the operations of those agencies can proceed in a coordinated manner, beginning as soon as a conflict ends. The Secretary-General's recommendation that a second window be established in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund should be considered in that light.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to reiterate that Japan will continue to do its utmost to alleviate the suffering of people around the world, responding to both complex emergencies and natural disasters, as it has in the past, through humanitarian organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the International Organization for Migration and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and on a bilateral basis.

Mr. Kenik (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): Twenty-six April 1996 will mark the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, whose catastrophic consequences are of truly global magnitude. For nearly 10 years the world community has gradually come to understand, and for many years to come will continue to learn, the bitter lessons of one of the most tragic events of the twentieth century. For all these years the international community has gradually been learning Chernobyl's true consequences for Belarus.

International research carried out with the participation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has shown irrefutably the unprecedented radiological and ecological damage inflicted on the Republic of Belarus. The data presented at the international conference on the future of nuclear energy after Chernobyl, held at Paris in 1991 under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), five years after the accident, showed that post-Chernobyl radiation doses for the

population of the Republic of Belarus are the highest in the world.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus is concerned about the continuing increase in cases of a number of thyroid diseases. The very alarming data in this connection have been confirmed in the report of a World Health Organization fact-finding mission.

The International Conference on the Health Consequences of Chernobyl and Other Radiological Accidents, held at Geneva from 20 to 23 November 1995, again confirmed the long-term impact of the Chernobyl disaster on the health of the population of the Republic of Belarus and the need to involve the world community in solving the whole range of post-Chernobyl problems.

The effects of Chernobyl are a decisive factor in all spheres of life in the Republic of Belarus, for the present generation and for many generations to come. Our country is still forced to allocate approximately one quarter of its national income to mitigating the consequences of the disaster. Even the special 12 per cent "Chernobyl tax" cannot compensate for the lack of resources to finance current programmes to deal with the consequences of the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Anxiety about the health and future life of our children creates additional tension in society. It also seriously impedes the progress of economic reforms and the creation of market structures in our country.

The revised edition of our national report, entitled "Republic of Belarus: Nine Years After Chernobyl — Situation, Problems, Action", gives a more detailed account of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and of our own and international efforts to overcome these consequences. Copies of the report are available to delegations.

Owing mainly to our bitter post-Chernobyl experience, we have come to understand the need to recognize the principles of collective security and collective responsibility in cooperation to prevent technological disasters. We appeal again to the international community to turn its attention to preventive measures such as the elaboration and implementation of measures to ensure the safety of existing nuclear reactors and the prevention of the effects of radiological incidents on distant ecosystems and people. In our view, special responsibility lies with countries and organizations that use nuclear energy and promote its peaceful uses. In this connection, we welcome the commitment made by Member States in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, adopted on 24 October 1995, to intensify cooperation to mitigate the effects of major technological and man-made disasters, and in the areas of disaster relief, post-disaster rehabilitation and humanitarian assistance, in order to enhance the ability of affected countries to cope with such situations.

The Secretary-General rightly notes in his report on agenda item 20 (c) that

> "Chernobyl signifies the reality of a prolonged humanitarian disaster of major proportions" (*A/50/418, para. 1*)

and that

> "a humanitarian tragedy of international magnitude ... can only be addressed through a strong and consistent international response". (*para. 80*)

As we evaluate the effectiveness of the international response, including the activities of the United Nations, we are obliged to say frankly that we in Belarus have ambiguous feelings. On one hand, we are grateful for the international support and assistance to the affected people provided in recent years. On the other hand, we feel a certain disappointment at the incomplete fulfilment of the mandates of the four consecutive consensus resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, resolutions 45/190, 46/150, 47/165 and 48/206. Unfortunately we are obliged to say that there has been incomplete use of the potential of the United Nations as a catalyst and in other ways, and of its information and incentive capabilities, to enhance cooperation and effective coordination of efforts in studying, mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

We appreciate the contribution of a number of Member States and organizations of the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to the development of long-term cooperation to mitigate and minimize the after-effects of the Chernobyl disaster. We also appreciate the work of other organizations, including regional organizations, and bilateral activities, particularly those of non-governmental

organizations, which have provided and are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance directly to the people affected, especially children, and we hope that these humanitarian efforts will continue.

At the same time, it is clear that the magnitude of the Chernobyl disaster in terms of a humanitarian tragedy, especially in the present economic and social context, has given rise to new and additional problems of general concern which, if they are to be resolved, require the establishment of broad-based and active international cooperation and the coordination of efforts in this sphere at the national and international levels. The problems of the Chernobyl refugees, the state of health of the people who helped to localize and eliminate the effects of the accident at the Chernobyl plant, the increase and spread of cancer and other diseases, particularly among children, are compounded by the economic difficulties of the complex period of transformation in Belarus.

We are convinced that the diverse assistance rendered to Belarus, Ukraine and Russia is not charity, all the worse so as it is gradually assuming the form of mutually advantageous cooperation, particularly in the area of research into the after-effects of Chernobyl. This is not just because a significant amount of factual and in many respects unique material, both on the effects of radiation and on measures to counter its harmful influence, including social rehabilitation measures, has been accumulated in Belarus. Clearly, the continued participation of the international scientific community in collecting and elaborating these priceless data and analysing the findings of our scientists would benefit mankind as a whole.

In this respect, it is clear that such traditional concepts as "donor" and "recipient" with regard to cooperation on Chernobyl and related matters will undergo further objective changes. In particular, this is borne out, *inter alia*, by the bilateral and multilateral agreements concluded between the States affected by the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and a number of other United Nations Member States, including Germany, Japan, the United States of America, and the agreements with intergovernmental organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as regional organizations, including the European Commission.

Experience of practical work in the framework of existing agreements between the three most affected States and WHO, the European Commission, UNESCO and other joint bilateral and international projects, for example, clearly shows the potential for new approaches to international cooperation on Chernobyl on a different footing to the past. We also hope that international efforts within the framework of bilateral Chernobyl cooperation with the three newly independent States will become more active.

The Republic of Belarus also believes that the resumption in Ukraine of the work of the International Scientific and Technological Centre for Nuclear and Radiological Accidents, with the participation of IAEA, will give greater opportunity for international collaboration to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of such accidents. We are ready, especially in the interests of the peoples of all three States most seriously affected by Chernobyl, to take part in the activities of the Centre on the basis of mutually acceptable principles. We also suggest that international projects and programmes implemented in the Polessky radioactive ecology reserve, which includes part of the contaminated areas of Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, should be continued, as should other international research projects on the basis of joint financing, setting aside the

> "ambivalence of the international community" (*A/50/418, para. 1*)

referred to in the Secretary-General's report.

The objective and critical analysis of existing activities and the list of constructive proposals and recommendations with regard to possible subsequent measures in the report of Secretary-General could provide a sound basis for future United Nations efforts and broad-based international assistance to the affected countries at the intergovernmental and non-governmental levels, with a view to mobilizing not only humanitarian organizations and the international scientific community, but also business circles and the national development potential of the affected States.

As the Assembly knows, the regular expanded meeting of the Quadripartite Committee for Coordination on Chernobyl, which is open to the participation of all interested countries and international organizations and institutions, will be held on 29 November 1995. The agenda of this meeting includes very important issues related to monitoring the relevant activities of the international community and the coordination of preparatory work for the forthcoming unhappy date of the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. Our

delegation is convinced that the tenth anniversary of Chernobyl could become a distinctive year of international solidarity with the victims of Chernobyl. In particular, Belarus hopes that the crisis in resources to support international projects and programmes related to Chernobyl, particularly within WHO, will be remedied. In this regard, the delegations which have co-sponsored draft resolution A/50/L.26 hope that the General Assembly will support our appeal to Member States, in particular donor States, relevant multilateral financial institutions and other concerned parties of the international community, including non-governmental organizations, to continue to provide international support to the ongoing efforts made by Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to cope with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and our request to the Secretary-General to appeal to Member States to intensify such assistance. We also count on the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Public Information to make a constructive contribution in providing information on Chernobyl initiatives and measures now being prepared both at the national level in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as in Vienna, Geneva, New York and Paris with the participation of organizations of the United Nations system and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In conclusion, I wish to assure the Assembly that in the later stages of our work, both during the meeting of the Quadripartite Committee already mentioned, involving the representatives of the Governments of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Hansen, and in the consultations on draft resolution A/50/L.26, the delegation of Belarus will work actively with all delegations in order to achieve international consensus in the interests of the people who suffered from the Chernobyl catastrophe.

Mrs. Deori (India): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for the reports under discussion today. While associating itself with the views put forward earlier by the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77, my delegation would like to make some additional points on this important agenda item.

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has come a long way since its establishment pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, strengthened by landmark resolutions such as 47/168, 48/57 and 48/162 which have sought to coordinate activity on this very complex item. One of the greatest challenges has been the readjustment of the role of the Organization, from one of humanitarian activity coordination into one that can respond to several complex emergencies, unsupported by commensurate resources. The challenge has been great indeed for Member States in ensuring that the guidelines laid out in the landmark resolution 46/182 are being followed, and that the separate and clear mandates of coordinating bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are kept distinct and focused during coordinated activities for humanitarian emergencies.

My delegation recognizes the overriding importance of effective coordination and the need for innovative thinking in trying to come to grips with the gravity and complexity of situations on the ground, especially when there is uncertainty about resources. The report argues for the strengthening of innovative mechanisms, both to enhance the core capacity of relief operations and to identify new means of responding to unprecedented needs. Any new initiatives or innovative concepts, however, will need to ensure that the Department's actions are in accordance with the clear mandates established by the General Assembly.

We should like at this point to re-emphasize that the principles agreed intergovernmentally in several forums over a period of time include the following: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States, the primary importance of the consent and appeals of affected countries and, finally, the primacy of the role of an affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. My delegation will support all humanitarian activities under the United Nations umbrella within these specified parameters.

The report makes several recommendations. My delegation is aware of the gravity of the responsibilities vested in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and it understands the prevailing anxiousness to strengthen the Department organizationally. We also understand the importance of safeguarding the security of humanitarian personnel on the ground. Some of the recommendations, however, relate to such matters as preventive diplomacy

and United Nations peacemaking activities. As these are at various stages of discussion between Member States, specific recommendations at this point could have the unintended effect of prejudging the issues.

My delegation also has reservations about proposals involving the diversion of resources from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) — either principal or interest — for any administrative requirement, such as initial security arrangements, especially as we still do not have a satisfactory CERF accounting procedure in place. We believe that there should be more intergovernmental discussions before such far-reaching recommendations are implemented.

My delegation noted the exhortation to Member States to take account of the larger context within which humanitarian assistance is provided, in order to ensure greater coherence in the direction of the governing bodies of the United Nations specialized agencies and bodies. This is a valid exhortation, but what is urged is already being implemented by Member countries.

The direction of the governing bodies of the specialized agencies and funds is comprehensive. However, there is a deficiency that needs to be addressed urgently: the problem of the resistance of the specialized agencies and bodies to a coordinated and disciplined allocation of their duties in accordance with their mandates. Such an allocation, as well as making assistance more effective, could result in optimum use of scarce resources. While welcoming the consolidated-appeals approach in this regard, we wish to reiterate the need to respect the requirements of the countries concerned — the element of consent — before such activities are embarked upon.

My delegation agrees that it is important that the rehabilitation and development segments be strengthened. However, as these are new concepts, there is a need for strengthening and clarification through intergovernmental discussion. Many countries have long experience in rehabilitation and development, experience from which the United Nations system could benefit if procedures were put in place following intergovernmental discussions.

In this connection, we welcome the recommendation that indigenous capacities and local mechanisms should be strengthened. My delegation recalls that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has already been given a mandate to undertake such a strengthening of national capacity in any area where the host Government feels it to be necessary. It should also be pointed out that in the new UNDP procedures that have been agreed to intergovernmentally there is a third category of resources — those allocated specifically to countries with special needs, including emergency needs. Duplication should be avoided in the activities of the various United Nations agencies.

An allocation from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund is again being recommended for this purpose. Developing countries have already given up a portion of their indicative planning figure resource entitlement, under UNDP line 1.1.3, for precisely such emergency requirements. The allocation of funds for emergencies should not become an open-ended process in the case of all agencies, as that would not be fair to recipient countries already reeling under a serious crunch on resources for development activities. Such uncoordinated recommendations from the United Nations system are the surest prescription for squandering scarce United Nations funds for development.

My delegation also feels that the Secretariat's recommendation that donors earmark a portion of their contributions for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is, at best, highly inappropriate and militates against the universal and voluntary nature of such contributions that Member States have been seeking, in various forums, to re-establish.

My delegation would like to comment briefly on the "White Helmets" initiative of Argentina, which we have found to be within the existing United Nations framework and have consequently supported. We see this initiative as being supportive of and supplementary to the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Volunteers.

In conclusion, we should like to reiterate that the gravity of humanitarian emergencies should not be allowed to blur functional distinctions between the various United Nations agencies or to override the requirements, desires or wishes of sovereign Governments. We should not succumb to the temptation of letting ourselves be carried away by the present and whittling down the sagacity of the past, as that could only result in a confused future.

We need clear distinctions when defining the relationships between the functions and imperatives of peace-keeping and peacemaking and the principles of humanitarian access, which are primarily neutrality, impartiality and the consent of the affected State. The

distinctions are fine but none the less relevant, valid and crucial. My delegation will continue to support all United Nations efforts in the area of humanitarian assistance that are mandated by General Assembly resolutions and by intergovernmental decisions.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Madagascar has requested to participate in the debate on this agenda item. As the list of speakers was closed at 4.30 p.m. yesterday, I shall ask the Assembly if there is any objection to the inclusion of that delegation in the list of speakers.

As I hear no objection, Madagascar is to be included in the list of speakers.

Mr. Junejo (Pakistan): Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the Secretary-General's report (A/50/203 and Add.1) on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. The report correctly presents the issue of humanitarian assistance in its overall political context. It thereby succeeds in identifying the major problems being faced by the international community in the area of humanitarian assistance and in focusing attention on the measures that are required to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in this field.

In recent years, the international community has been confronted with an increasing number of humanitarian crises. These crises have resulted mainly from man-made conflict situations and not from natural disasters. Almost 50 conflicts are being waged in different parts of the world today. These conflicts have certain defining features: First, their victims are primarily civilians, with women and children bearing the brunt of fighting. Secondly, the people caught in these situations are often subjected to the most horrendous violations of their human rights. Women are subjected to rape and sexual abuse. Young men are ruthlessly tortured and executed. Entire families are forced to leave their homes and seek refuge, either as internally displaced persons or as refugees in foreign lands. Thirdly, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report:

> "the suffering endured by civilians is not an incidental element of political and military strategies but constitutes its major objective." *(A/50/203, para. 11)*

The aim is to terrorize opponents into submission. In the process, humanitarian law is flouted with impunity. Fourthly, in many of these situations either humanitarian agencies are denied access to the conflict areas or their ability to provide humanitarian assistance is severely constrained. All these elements have been fully evident in the crises in Rwanda, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In occupied Kashmir the situation has a unique dimension. The Indian Government itself is the cause of the crisis. Indian armed forces have unleashed a reign of terror on defenceless civilians. In an effort to break the morale of the Kashmiri resistance, Indian troops have deliberately targeted women and children. Incidents of mass rape and sexual abuse have become a matter of routine and are well documented. Indeed, this has been documented in repeated reports of respected human-rights organizations.

A recent egregious violation of humanitarian norms by the Indian forces is the blockade of the Neelam Valley in Azad Kashmir. Road links to the Neelam Valley in Azad Kashmir have been cut off by frequent firing by Indian forces across the Line of Control. The bulk of the relief supplies to the people in the Neelam Valley have to be air-dropped. With the onset of winter, the alternative road constructed for sending supplies has been blocked. As a result, some 100,000 residents of the Valley are facing a grave humanitarian crisis.

In the context of conflicts, a focus on provision of humanitarian assistance alone is not going to be of much help to the affected populations. Measures need to be taken in four critical areas.

First, and above all, the international community must address the underlying causes of the conflicts if the sufferings of the affected people are to be brought to an end. We are in complete agreement with the Secretary-General that

> "The provision of humanitarian assistance in a vacuum is tantamount to managing only the symptoms of a crisis. Experience shows that, in most instances, the effectiveness of humanitarian endeavors in conflict settings is largely predicated on successful action by the international community to resolve the problems that provoked the crisis." *(ibid., para. 16)*

Secondly, while conflicts are going on strict compliance with international humanitarian law must be ensured. In this regard, we fully endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation that

> "in accordance with the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, Member States should use their influence with parties to an armed conflict to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law and respect for the activities undertaken by impartial humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross]." *(ibid., para. 157)*

We are also heartened by the intention of the Secretary-General to make compliance with humanitarian law a central focus of United Nations activities.

Thirdly, those responsible for violations of humanitarian law should be held accountable for their crimes. Perpetrators of such crimes should realize that they shall not be able to escape the consequences of their actions. Establishment of international tribunals to prosecute violators of humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are a most welcome development. Similar tribunals should be established to prosecute elements engaged in gross violations of human rights elsewhere.

Finally, the strengthening of the United Nations machinery to deal with humanitarian crises needs close consideration. In this regard we would like to support certain steps that are being taken. We welcome the focus of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on five broad areas, particularly on the need to ensure compliance with humanitarian law. We also appreciate the efforts of the Department to involve all relevant entities in emergency coordination activities. The invitations extended to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General's representative for internally displaced persons to attend the Inter-Agency Standing Committees meetings are steps in the right direction.

The effectiveness of the United Nations humanitarian assistance machinery is to a great extent dependent on the level of funding it receives. The role of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund is critical to the ability of the United Nations to mount a rapid, coordinated response to emergencies. It is a matter of concern that the United Nations is facing difficulties in maintaining the Fund at the minimum level of $50 million. We would, therefore, support the Secretary-General's recommendation that Member States respond favourably to replenishing the Fund to cover advances that have been outstanding for more than a year. In regard to funding, we would also favour consideration of measures to provide extrabudgetary support to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on a continued and assured basis. The Department remains the key coordinator within the international humanitarian system, and its activities would suffer if it were constrained to operate within its limited regular budget funding.

The humanitarian crises engendered by armed conflicts should be addressed in all their dimensions. The provision of immediate relief and rehabilitation assistance is one aspect of these crises. The other aspect, to which the international community needs to give greater attention, is the resolution of the underlying causes of these crises. Unless these causes are addressed and resolved, the victims of the humanitarian crises will not be assured of a lasting solution to their tragic predicament.

Mr. Yuan Shaofu (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his reports submitted to the General Assembly at this session on the items entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance" and "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development". We have also taken note with appreciation of the unremitting efforts made by Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen and, under his leadership, by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the field of emergency humanitarian assistance over the past year.

The Chinese delegation would like to take this opportunity to state its views on some aspects of the items under consideration. The Chinese delegation is very much concerned about emergency humanitarian assistance and attaches great importance to and supports the central role played by the United Nations in coordinating various assistance activities. Amid mounting calls for emergency assistance, as a result of frequent natural and man-made disasters in recent years, the United Nations organs and agencies in charge of humanitarian assistance are confronted with formidable and unprecedented challenges. Therefore, how to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations system so as to ensure both a more rapid and effective response and the transition from relief assistance to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development constitute an important question that needs to be addressed vigorously.

The Chinese delegation believes that in order for the United Nations to enhance its capacity to coordinate various humanitarian assistance activities and provide a rapid and effective response to disasters, it is crucial that the United Nations be well funded. However, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund established by a General Assembly resolution is suffering from dwindling resources, which gravely impairs the capacity of the United Nations to respond rapidly to the need for emergency humanitarian assistance and to play its central coordinating role. Therefore, the pressing task now is to increase donations to the Fund as soon as possible; the developed countries should fulfil their commitments by increasing their donations to the Fund.

The Chinese delegation wishes to reiterate here that the basic principles governing humanitarian assistance, as set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182 — namely, humanitarianism, neutrality, equity and the absence of political conditions — should be fully respected and implemented. Furthermore, the Chinese delegation wishes to express its concern for the security of personnel carrying out relief assistance in war-torn countries. We hope that the United Nations system and States concerned will, in accordance with the principles of international law and the norms governing State relations, provide the necessary protection to humanitarian relief workers so that they can operate in safety.

China is a developing country, and also a disaster-prone one. We are acutely aware that disasters cause suffering in people's lives, losses to their production and damage to society and the economy. Therefore, the Chinese Government and people deeply sympathize with affected countries for their plight and actively provide them with relief assistance within our means in response to calls contained in the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Chinese delegation fully endorses and supports the United Nations in its provision of special economic assistance to Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, the Sudan, Somalia and Rwanda.

It has been nine years since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The Chinese delegation wishes to express its deep sympathy to Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and to the people of those three countries for their prolonged suffering caused by the disaster and its aftermath. We note with appreciation the Government of Ukraine's political decision that it may close the nuclear power plant in the year 2000. We also support the efforts of those three countries to strengthen international coordination and cooperation, with a view to studying, alleviating and reducing as much as possible the consequences of that disaster. It is our hope that the international community, particularly the countries in a position to do so, and international financial institutions will actively cooperate with them in the fields of finance, science and technology.

The initiative to establish "White Helmets", pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/139 B and Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/44, has attracted widespread interest. It is the view of the Chinese delegation that "White Helmets" play an important complementary role in and contribute to the strengthening of the developing countries' reserve capacity and the efforts of the United Nations in the fields of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development. In order for the "White Helmets" to carry out their activities smoothly and effectively, the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs should take necessary measures to coordinate effectively the roles and activities of the "White Helmets", the United Nations system and other international organizations.

To conclude, the Chinese delegation wishes to point out that in establishing "White Helmets" in developing countries, the principle of voluntarism should be adhered to.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): I am privileged to speak on this important agenda item on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, for the commendable work that he has undertaken under very difficult circumstances. The Secretary-General deserves our thanks for his useful reports on the subject. My delegation fully shares the views expressed by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The high incidence of natural and man-made disasters and the increase in civil and ethnic strife in recent times have demonstrated the need for a more effective and coordinated response by the international community. Appropriate and prompt responses to emergency situations are essential to assist victims, defuse tension and create a climate conducive to the resolution of crisis situations.

It is all the more important to identify and address the root causes of emergencies. Otherwise, the recurrence

of emergencies cannot be prevented, and States will not be able to grow out of a relief-dependency syndrome. It is therefore important that the transition from relief to rehabilitation and long-term sustainable development programmes be ensured.

The interrelationship of humanitarian activities and those having to do with peacemaking and peace-keeping is becoming increasingly evident. The delivery of humanitarian assistance has indeed become a vital part of United Nations peacemaking and peace-keeping endeavours. However, in formulating its humanitarian response to complex emergencies, the United Nations must ensure that the humanitarian aspect is not overtaken by political considerations. Bangladesh believes that humanitarian diplomacy, as conceptualized and carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, forms an important part of preventive diplomacy.

The security of humanitarian personnel remains a serious problem. The tasks of humanitarian relief personnel in many areas of the world have become increasingly difficult in recent months. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the safety and security of personnel engaged in humanitarian relief work. The international community must demonstrate its determination to enforce the rule of law and to hold accountable those who are responsible for violating such laws. The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel must be fully respected by all parties in the field.

Since it was created, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) has been used in a number of emergency situations, with encouraging results. With increasing demands on the Fund, due to the proliferation and magnitude of crisis situations, as well as to some delay in replenishing the Fund, we feel that it is time to address seriously the issue of increasing CERF resources. We support the recommendation to set up a separate window within the CERF for rehabilitation and confidence-building measures. The scope of the Fund can be expanded to facilitate the provision of emergency assistance in the case of protracted emergencies.

The consolidated appeals process, which was envisaged as a mechanism to promote integrated needs assessment and greater prioritization in mobilizing financial resources, has proved useful. Additional funding, however, remains crucial to meeting the demands of critical emergency situations. Field-level cooperation must be strengthened and joint programming has to be developed for the further success of the consolidated appeals process and to facilitate prompt donor response.

Given the magnitude and variety of crisis situations, my delegation fully supports the idea of stand-by arrangements with donor Governments and stockpiles of equipment and relief supplies. The idea of "White Helmets", as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 49/139 B, participating in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development is extremely relevant in this regard. The "White Helmets" initiative can draw important lessons from the experience of United Nations Volunteer programmes (UNV). The Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNV can coordinate and guide the "White Helmets" initiative. My delegation also believes that this initiative has the potential to strengthen South-South cooperation and contribute to national operational capacities. Many of the ideas contained in the report of the Secretary-General regarding the "White Helmets" are useful and deserve our special consideration.

The recent increase in the number of natural disasters and the consequent damage to the economies of the countries concerned needs the urgent attention of the international community. Natural disasters cause serious damage to countries irrespective of their level of development. However, the vulnerability of the developing countries to natural disasters and their recurrence is a matter of great concern. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has a special responsibility in this regard. Developing countries suffer more and damage to their economies is greater because of their weaker infrastructures and low capacity to respond immediately and effectively to disaster situations. As is rightly observed in the Secretary-General's report, the impact of natural disasters is 20 times greater in poorer countries than in industrialized settings. International solidarity is therefore essential to reduce the consequences of natural calamities in the developing countries.

In many cases, population pressures and poverty have led people to live in areas already exposed to natural and man-made hazards. Therefore, the broader problems of poverty, population- growth rate and so on should be addressed in an integrated and urgent manner in order to prevent or limit the consequences of disasters. Mitigation measures, including disaster preparedness and early-warning systems, should be built into development programmes and be an integral part of the continuum

from disaster to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Disaster-prone countries must at the same time be provided with the necessary resources and technical know-how to strengthen their preventive and mitigation capacities.

The collection and dissemination of information and United Nations systems for early warning of natural disasters have to be further strengthened. It is to be noted that the impact of natural disasters is felt most during the first two or three days. Any delay in reaching the affected people may cause thousands of deaths. Therefore, the prompt dispatch of United Nations disaster-assessment and coordination stand-by teams and the necessary resources is crucial.

My delegation would like to commend the work of the office of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva in the field of natural-disaster relief assistance. There is a need to enhance the indigenous capacities of Member States to face natural disasters effectively. The United Nations can further help disaster-prone countries to develop disaster-mitigation programmes and early-warning systems. Bangladesh would be happy to share its own experience in handling natural disasters with disaster-prone countries or United Nations agencies.

We feel that sustained efforts should be made to support the strengthening of the capacities of vulnerable countries and to promote the transfer of technology and information exchange. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs/United Nations Development Programme disaster-management training programme facilitates such national capacity-building for all phases of emergency management. Disaster-prone countries should receive priority in all training programmes.

Bangladesh feels that the coordination of United Nations emergency relief assistance can be more effective if it is synchronized with national relief efforts by taking into account their needs and priorities. This could be ensured through the proper integration of United Nations relief operations with those mounted by national authorities. National experiences and capacities are to be taken into account in dealing with special and recurrent emergencies. In this context, United Nations field agencies should work in close cooperation with national agencies.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the United Nations is best equipped to play a central role in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance, taking into account the principles of impartiality, neutrality and transparency which form the basis of United Nations operations.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on agenda item 20, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", on behalf of the 13 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which are members of the United Nations, namely Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Jamaica.

The CARICOM countries wish, first of all, to associate themselves with the statement made on this item by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report contained in documents A/50/203 and A/50/203/Add.1, in which he recognizes the progress that has been made in strengthening coordination and cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system and other governmental and non-governmental partners in the area of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. Admittedly, with the onslaught of sudden crises and the proliferation of natural and other man-made disasters, new challenges and competing needs have repeatedly highlighted the importance of establishing a well-organized and adequately financed mechanism for coordination, both within the multi-actor humanitarian arena and with other elements of the international system involved in crisis management and pre-emptive action.

We consider it important that the United Nations, in collaboration with Member States, non-governmental and international organizations, continue to seek the most effective methods of coordination in addressing humanitarian crises. Our Governments support the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in the advancement of humanitarian concerns. The major areas of focus which are outlined in the Secretary-General's report will undoubtedly contribute to the consolidation of the work of the Department. The CARICOM countries recognize the importance of these areas and welcome, in particular, the evolution of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as the principal policy coordination mechanism, the consolidated appeals process, and the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. We have taken

careful note of the Standing Committee's recommendation for an increase in the size of the Fund and for its timely replenishment, since delayed reimbursements could have a serious impact on the Fund's ability to meet requirements in emergency situations.

The efforts by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to undertake extensive consultations with its humanitarian partners and with the traditional and non-traditional donor communities in order to increase the financial support and broaden the donor base of the Fund are indeed commendable and can only serve to consolidate the important work of the Department and its bodies.

The CARICOM countries acknowledge the importance of ongoing work in database and information compilation in a variety of critical areas, including the Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS), the International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System, the de-mining database and the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities. New technologies, particularly in data-gathering and communication, have made possible many advances in the predictability of potentially destructive natural phenomena. We know from firsthand experience the vital role that timely and accurate information plays at all stages of an emergency, and anticipate the development of close collaboration between the United Nations and our Governments in this regard in areas relevant to our circumstances.

The tragedies that continue to confront the international community are indeed overwhelming. The growth in the frequency and brutality of intra-State conflict is a defining feature of the 1990s. The reality of contemporary warfare is evident in the proliferation of displaced persons who are obliged to cross borders to flee from the horrors of war. The violence of modern warfare is compounded by the increase in the number of persons affected.

Over the last 25 years, the damage caused to people and to the productive infrastructure of developing countries by natural phenomena has also risen. Moreover, natural disasters, like complex emergencies, absorb increasing amounts of global resources and retard development agendas. Besides human and economic losses, they have in some instances destabilized the social and political fabric.

The democracies of the Caribbean have fortunately been spared the instability and the ravages of war and civil strife. However, hurricanes, floods, storms, landslides, volcanic activity and drought have proved to be equally destructive for our countries. In the aftermath of these natural tragedies, thousands are left homeless, fatalities are not uncommon, and billions of dollars in economic losses are often recorded. We therefore concur with the Secretary-General in his report that vulnerability to disasters has become a major obstacle to economic and social development. We recall the estimate that the impact of natural disasters is 20 times greater in poorer countries than in industrialized ones.

The extreme vulnerability of the Caribbean to natural disasters is demonstrated by the multiple occurrences of hurricanes, storms, floods and landslides which leave their annual trail of misery throughout our region. This year in particular has been testimony to the fact that hurricanes can destroy the social and economic infrastructure of our various countries. In September, hurricane Luis left a trail of destruction and devastation in the islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Maarten and the Virgin Islands, leaving thousands without shelter or access to adequate supplies of food, water, electricity and other basic services. Extensive damage to crops estimated at some 80 per cent was reported in Dominica. Prior to hurricane Luis, damage caused by tropical storm Iris was also reported in August. Possibly the worst hit was Antigua and Barbuda, with damage estimated by the Government at approximately $350 million. The tourist industry was dealt a blow with severe repercussions for those employed in the industry.

The island of Barbados, particularly the eastern parishes, was also hit by hurricane Marilyn, which damaged mainly houses and utility services, causing some 1,400 persons to seek shelter. The southern islands of the Bahamas were also affected by tropical storm Erin, which caused interruptions in telephone and electricity supply networks. The hurricane season was a particularly prolific one, thereby illustrating the vulnerability of the Caribbean islands to natural disasters of this kind.

Although not affected by natural disaster, Guyana was affected by the spillage of cyanide from the Omai gold mine. This generated grave concern for and among the inhabitants of the area and about the environmental effects, especially given the fact that the cyanide was reported to have contaminated the river water.

It is experiences like these that have led our region to give priority attention to the strengthening of national and regional institutions and mechanisms aimed at increasing the capabilities of our disaster-prone countries

in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. A comprehensive blueprint for action in this regard is provided in chapter II of the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, through which the international community gave special recognition to the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States to the effects of natural and environmental disasters. Strong commitment and support at the international level and by the United Nations agencies operating in the humanitarian assistance field are indispensable for the successful implementation of the important actions recommended in that chapter to address the special needs of this group of countries.

At this juncture, CARICOM wishes to express sincere gratitude to the United Nations, and in particular to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), as well as to those countries which, in the aftermath of the recent hurricanes, helped provide emergency relief assistance and contributed to the restoration of devastated areas. The emergency and other assistance that was received in this crisis is a true indication of the willingness of the United Nations and the international community in general to contribute and respond readily to crises.

The Yokohama Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held in May 1994, took into consideration the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action, and, in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, accorded special consideration to the particular situation of small island developing States.

Our Governments participated actively in this Conference, and we are fully supportive of its outcomes, as we are of the goals and activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The issues these complementary activities have sought to highlight are of direct relevance to the situations we face in the Caribbean region, and we look forward to cooperating closely with the secretariat for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in devising relevant programmes in respect of our region, on the basis of the Yokohama Strategy.

The CARICOM member States wish to thank the various United Nations and regional organizations, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations that have supported our efforts to develop a comprehensive disaster-management infrastructure to serve the countries of the subregion. The assistance of WHO, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) have been of considerable significance in this context. PAHO, in particular, has been collaborating closely with regional Governments and has provided advisory health services in the humanitarian field, as well as contributing to the capacity-building needs of the region through seminars, workshops, public-awareness efforts and the introduction of its Supply Management Project, which is designed to sort, classify and inventory the arrival of large quantities of relief supplies in post-disaster situations. A memorandum of understanding between PAHO and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), established in 1991 in order to strengthen the region's institutional capacity for disaster management and response, formalized its designation as health-disaster response advisor to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency again successfully demonstrated its capacity to respond to the onslaught of the various hurricanes and tropical storms this season. With every crisis important lessons are learned, which invariably contribute to the strengthening of future procedures. CDERA has been working to refine its relief-supply tracking system, and has coordinated several important activities in community disaster planning, shelter management and enhancing the development of disaster exercise and simulation capability within member States. Caribbean Governments wish to put on record their appreciation for the funding and support of these activities, provided in particular by the Canadian International Development Agency, through its International Humanitarian Assistance Programme, and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development. The non-governmental organization community, in particular the Red Cross Societies and the Caribbean Conference of Churches, have also played an important role in these activities.

The CARICOM member States wish to reiterate the need for international humanitarian policies to emphasize and provide adequately for the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development if long-term solutions are to be found. We are also persuaded, from our own direct experience, that one of the priority objectives of these policies should be the decentralization of response strategies through the strengthening of institutional

disaster-management capabilities at the local, national and subregional levels. We also believe that the traditional knowledge and experience of the populations and Governments of disaster-prone countries are vital resources which must be more effectively developed and utilized.

CARICOM countries continue to give their full support to the "White Helmets" initiative as an innovative method by which the United Nations can tackle aspects of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development in a thorough and cost-effective manner.

Indeed, the "White Helmets" initiative demonstrates that it is still possible to arrive at creative solutions to long-standing problems, not by devising new programmes but by utilizing mechanisms that already exist within the United Nations system.

In this regard, we wish once again to express our appreciation to the Government of Argentina, not only for conceptualizing the "White Helmets" initiative, but for continuing to contribute financial and personnel resources towards its implementation. We believe that it is important for the success of the programme for there to be careful coordination of its activities with other sectors of the United Nations system and other international organizations.

It is against this background that we welcome the coordinating role being played by the United Nations Volunteers programme, which functions as the operational arm of the "White Helmets" initiative.

The project activities already identified cover the range of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development. To cite two examples from the Caribbean region, in Haiti, where the initiative is already operational, the project is aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of food distribution.

The pilot project in Jamaica, which will commence shortly, will focus on the rehabilitation of hospital equipment. This project should provide useful lessons which can be applied in many other countries, in emergency as well as in non-emergency situations.

We also wish to emphasize the valuable contribution of the United Nations Volunteers, without whom the "White Helmets" initiative could not have been implemented. We believe that we should continue to encourage the use of "White Helmets" to support activities in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance, as well as in the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

Mr. Kaid (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes to refer to the Secretary-General's report (A/50/301) on the provision of assistance to Yemen under item 20 (b) of the agenda. In this respect, we should like to express our thanks and appreciation for the Secretary-General's efforts in preparing the report. We should like also to thank the organizations, specialized agencies and Member States that have contributed to the provision of assistance to Yemen for their prompt response to the Government's appeal for assistance in a number of major areas. We look forward to an enhanced response to our needs in view of the economic and political reforms undertaken by Yemen.

As is well known, my country was the victim of a war as a result of a secessionist attempt which sought to undermine our unity. As a result, the economic structures of the country have suffered great damage. It is our hope that the international community and the United Nations organizations as well as non-governmental organizations and States would step up their assistance in order to enable us to cope with the devastation and loss caused by that war to our national economy.

Mr. Habiyaremye (Rwanda) (*interpretation from French*): This is not the first time that the Rwandese delegation has addressed this Assembly, over which Mr. Freitas do Amaral is so worthily presiding at this fiftieth session, on the subject of refugees, the restoration of peace, and Rwanda's reconstruction and social and economic development after the unfortunate events of last year: war, genocide and massacres, as well as the resultant massive exodus of Rwandans.

May I express through you, Sir, the thanks of the Rwandese survivors, impoverished and traumatized, for the concern displayed by the international community in this difficult situation. We appreciate the way it responded to the appeal in resolution 49/23. One year after the adoption of that resolution without a vote, it is time for an assessment, and the report of the Secretary-General before us in document A/50/654 sets the tone for this. The delegation of Rwanda is speaking to reiterate its appeal for the international community's solidarity with Rwanda, which is doing everything possible to ensure a normal life in Rwanda that will last. In order to bring the voices of our international partners into harmony, I should like to dwell for a moment on Rwanda's experience so that the international community can

measure the importance of the tireless efforts of the Rwandese Government and the efforts of the international community, of which the Rwandese Government has been the beneficiary.

The Government of national union, in office since 19 July 1994, has made the return of refugees the highest priority, not only to regain its seriously affected human capital, but also to break with the exclusionary policies motivated by the segregationist political aims that had previously prevailed in the country. Great progress has truly been made, not in restoring a semblance of normality in Rwanda but, rather, in finding a lasting solution to the problem of the internally displaced and the repatriated persons, in restoring full peace, in reconstructing Rwanda, and in ensuring its social and economic development.

The source of the internal tensions that the Secretary-General draws attention to in paragraph 94 of his report is the extraterritoriality of the problem of the repatriation of refugees and the international community's apathy in regard to the threat from, and the repeated attempts at the destabilization of Rwanda by, the former governmental forces, which are being rearmed and are operating with impunity. These irregular forces are not in Rwanda; they are on the borders of neighbouring countries. Rwanda is subjected to infiltration and acts of terrorism and banditry perpetrated by these elements of the former government, protected by certain friendly countries, openly pointed to in the report under consideration. The processes of repatriation, reconciliation and reconstruction have begun, but they are undermined by the insecurity caused by the reports of intimidation and disinformation in certain refugee camps, which are preventing refugees from agreeing freely to repatriation despite the presence of courageous soldiers and police.

The international community has witnessed the Rwandese Government's openness to dialogue and its cooperation in all forums that have taken up the problem of Rwandan refugees. In gratitude for the international community's support, the Government of Rwanda has always been faithful to the commitments it made at the Nairobi and Bujumbura conferences. However, the same political will should compel those who are involved in this problem, either directly or indirectly.

It is time for the procrastination based on the pretext that the ethnic problems are insurmountable to stop and for the policies aimed at stabilizing the Great Lakes subregion to prevail over the selfish and machiavellian interests of some. Without any further delay, States — above all, those in the region — must implement Security Council resolutions 955 (1994), which established the International Tribunal for Rwanda, and 978 (1995), which urged States to arrest and detain persons found within their territory against whom there is sufficient evidence that they were responsible for acts within the jurisdiction of the International Tribunal for Rwanda. These Security Council resolutions correspond completely to the concerns of the Rwandese Government, which regards justice as an indispensable and sure step towards the reconciliation among the people of Rwanda.

Thus justice is of a twofold nature: there must be distributive justice to identify the guilty and assail the impunity of all criminals who acted with intent; and this must be complemented by commutative justice to oversee the development of a "social contract" of reconciliation that will enable Rwandese society to mend a social fabric that has been sorely rent by genocide and massacre and thus to rebuild the foundations of the nation that Rwanda once was.

Repatriation, the justice of reconciliation, and reconstruction without threat of attack or mine-laying on Rwanda's territory: all of this must take place. Repatriating the genuine refugees will make it possible to identify those responsible for genocide — who are not only blocking those who wish to return home, but who are preparing an armed invasion. Once it has been restored, justice will let us sort out the criminals from the innocent, and to free the latter from our prisons.

In that connection, members must try to understand that the pitiable conditions in prisons and detention centres are of concern to the Government of Rwanda. But these are matched by the magnitude of the crimes and the number of criminals implicated in horrors to which the entire international community closed its eyes in amazed resignation.

Within its limited means, my Government has already established high judicial bodies, and a Triage Commission is about to begin its work. We acknowledge the aid provided to improve conditions of detention. Those conditions were not intentional, but were imposed by the unusual circumstances that dictated arrests that, while massive in number, were not arbitrary.

The restoration of the economy and the undertaking of development projects in Rwanda remain fundamental to the creation of conditions that will favour the return of the refugees. That crucial objective must be recognized

by all of my Government's international partners, including non-governmental organizations, whose mandates must in no case be incompatible with the common task of reconstruction and socio-economic restoration.

In conclusion, my delegation echoes the Secretary-General's appeal to the donor community speedily to fulfil their promises of support and provide practical measures of development assistance. To that end, Rwanda intends soon to submit a draft resolution based on the resolution adopted last year, which will request that the question of assistance to Rwanda be retained on the agenda of the fifty-first session.

Mr. DeCotiis (United States): The United States is a sponsor and a strong supporter of draft resolution A/50/L.23, on "White Helmets". When President Menem of Argentina first announced the "White Helmets" idea, President Clinton endorsed the concept here in the General Assembly. Since that time it has captured the imagination of many of us who believe that the United Nations makes the world a better place.

The United States shares with numerous other nations a long tradition of volunteerism. The American wilderness was tamed and our nation was built on the cooperative labour of people who knew that none would survive and prosper unless all did so. A few days ago we celebrated Thanksgiving, commemorating a time when the Pilgrims newly arrived in New England gave thanks for the assistance they received from their God and from their neighbours, the Native Americans. The pioneers who pushed westward continued this tradition of cooperation and mutual voluntary assistance, taking part in community harvest activities, quilting bees and barn raisings. This tradition continues today in such forms as the Peace Corps, the Americorps volunteers who teach in our inner-city schools, and the thousands of non-governmental organizations which continue their good work thanks to those who contribute time and money.

But willing hands and hearts are only part of the total picture. In order to succeed in practice, the "White Helmets" concept will require material and logistical support, experienced leadership, a clearly defined and achievable mission, and coordination with the many organizations involved in relief, recovery and development. This is why my delegation has strongly urged that "White Helmet" activities be coordinated through the United Nations Volunteers. We are pleased to see that this draft resolution points to the operational role of the United Nations Volunteers in selection, training, deployment and effective utilization of the "White Helmets".

As the Secretariat recently reported, "White Helmet" activities have already been identified for Armenia, Haiti, Gaza, Angola and Jamaica. We note with interest that other proposals are being put forward to address needs in the Great Lakes region of Africa and in Latin America, and we expect that future opportunities may soon arise. Our greatest challenge in managing these activities will not be to find opportunities or willing and capable volunteers, but to define achievable project goals clearly and to ensure the support and safety of the volunteers once they are in place.

The United States looks forward to playing an appropriate role in this worthy effort. In this connection, we have identified the United States Agency for International Development and the Federal Emergency Management Agency as our points of contact in matters relating to "White Helmets".

The "White Helmets" concept offers a continuing opportunity for citizens of all nations to bring their experience and wisdom to bear on some of our most challenging problems. It is a useful mechanism for expanded North-South and South-South cooperation. It can be brought to bear on a given situation at any stage in the continuum of relief, recovery and development. And its greatest strength will be the enthusiasm of those selected for the honour of representing all of our countries in service to those in greatest need.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations

A/50/PV.72

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

72nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 28 November 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Camacho Omiste (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 20 and 154 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/203-E/1995/79 and Add.1)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/50/286-E/1995/113, A/50/292-E/195/115, A/50/301, A/50/311, A/50/423, A/50/424, A/50/447, A/50/455, A/50/464, A/50/506, A/50/522, A/50/534, A/50/654 and A/50/763)

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/50/743)

Draft resolutions (A/50/L.27, A/50/L.29, A/50/L.30, A/50/L.31, A/50/L.32, A/50/L.33)

(c) Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/418)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.26)

Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Note by the Secretariat (A/50/542)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.23)

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like again to remind members that, as announced previously, the Assembly has deferred to a later date, to be announced, consideration of two aspects of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20 — namely, those concerning special emergency assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of Burundi, and international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia — as well as sub-item (d) of agenda item 20, concerning emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan.

95-86850 (E)

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Mr. Ravelomanantsoa-Ratsimihah (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): As this is my first speech in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly at this session, I should like to begin by performing the most pleasant duty of extending the Malagasy delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as a Vice-President and to the other officers of the Assembly on their election and of wishing you all full success in the discharge of the responsibilities that have been entrusted to you collectively.

Indeed, the Malagasy delegation is doubly grateful to the President and to the members of the General Assembly for granting its request for permission to take part in the debate on agenda item 20 even though the list of speakers had been closed.

With regard to sub-item (b) of agenda item 20, the delegation of Madagascar has very carefully studied the Secretary-General's report (A/50/292), which was prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/36, following General Assembly resolution 48/234 on emergency assistance to Madagascar. The delegation of Madagascar takes this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on his concise and accurate report on the special geographical conditions in Madagascar and this region of the Indian Ocean, which is continually exposed to the ravages of tropical cyclones and to the widespread damage caused by these natural disasters.

We take this opportunity to thank the international community for everything it did in response to the prescriptions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/36, as well as the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, which had already undertaken a technical-assistance project — MAG/84/014 — to strengthen the Malagasy Government's arrangements for intervention in cases of natural disaster, at a cost of $400,000, revised upward to $700,000, at the request of the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to include the area of food security, and jointly underwritten by the World Food Programme and UNDP. This is an effective example of coordination, which my delegation hopes will be expanded to the whole family of United Nations bodies.

For its part, the Government of Madagascar has taken steps to combat the consequences of natural disasters by setting up a national fund to finance recovery and reconstruction activities. In addition, Madagascar, with the support of donors, has established a national fund for rebuilding damaged roads, 60 per cent of which is financed by the Malagasy State and 40 per cent by the European Development Fund. The report notes other measures that have been taken with regard to disaster monitoring, soil conservation and rice production, but, as the representative of the Philippines emphasized yesterday when he spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 — and we share his point of view — all those measures are no more than stopgaps, and there is a need to envisage a long-term plan enabling the developing countries in particular, which are more vulnerable than the industrial countries, to move from the stage of emergency assistance to that of reconstruction.

I do not wish to be unduly pessimistic, but it is indeed possible that after a cyclone has passed we shall find ourselves back at square one, that all the accomplishments of several years will have been wiped out in a few hours, or even a few minutes, and that we shall have to begin all over again. My delegation therefore earnestly hopes that the Yokohama Strategy for the prevention of natural disasters will be implemented in order to reduce, if not completely avoid, the damaging effects of such catastrophes.

In highlighting the value of the activities undertaken by all the United Nations organs and bodies, both governmental and non-governmental, involved in the strengthening and coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance, including special economic assistance, the Government of Madagascar would like to reiterate its deepest gratitude to all, those from near and far, who have contributed to them.

In concluding, the Malagasy delegation would like to emphasize that, like wars, poverty, famine and major epidemics, natural disasters are one of the great challenges before mankind at the end of this century, and we call upon the international community to take action to face it together and integrate it into a strategy for sustainable development. It cannot be denied that technological, scientific, human and even financial resources are more available than ever, if only the political will exists. Small countries like our own can do nothing against natural disasters, as the Secretary-General himself has noted:

> "Clearly, the Government of Madagascar at this time lacks the resources and the capacity to undertake an immediate and coherent emergency response and requires the continuing support of the international community.

...

"In spite of all these efforts, Madagascar remains vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters." *(A/50/292, paras. 12 and 16)*

Indeed, in 1995 Madagascar suffered no cyclones comparable to those of 1994. No state of emergency has been declared during this period, for which our delegation is grateful. But it nevertheless remains true that activities to strengthen the national capacity for intervention and reconstruction must be pursued, other assessments must be made and, of crucial importance, new sources of financing must be found. Madagascar believes that it can count on the international community.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia)(*interpretation from French*): In speaking today on agenda item 20, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", the Tunisian delegation would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for the excellence of the documentation submitted on this item.

The Secretary-General's concerns about the devastating effects of natural disasters and other emergency situations, including the loss of life they cause and their negative effect on economic and social development, as expressed in his report, are all shared by country.

Today, no region is totally immune to or untouched by natural disasters and man-made devastation. In poor regions, disasters have longer-term effects, since the populations affected are more vulnerable from an economic and social standpoint. In recent decades the proliferation of disasters in disadvantaged and ecologically fragile regions has contributed to a sometimes irreparable degradation of the environment.

Poverty, demographic pressures and soil use in areas at risk are all factors that have exacerbated environmental damage. In many cases they have caused destruction and an imbalance between man and his natural environment.

Need we emphasize any further the complex nature of natural disasters and other emergency situations, or that the populations and countries affected by them must face them with extremely limited human and material resources? Hence the importance of rapid reaction and the need for intelligent field coordination to limit damages, mitigate the consequences of disasters and enable populations to resume as normal a life as possible and take control of their situation. At the same time, prompt field coordination makes it possible for local and national authorities to respond speedily and effectively to the needs and expectations of the victims of such emergency situations.

In this enormous task the contribution of the United Nations system, together with governmental authorities, is of the utmost importance. Obviously, our States have all, in different ways, set up structures to deal with priority tasks in difficult situations. However, in such complex situations the expertise, experience and technical know-how available to the United Nations system are indispensable, given the magnitude such disasters often assume and the needs they create, which often go beyond the capacities of States.

In the field, the experience of recent years has shown that the effectiveness of the response to disasters and emergency situations depends on coordination and centralization in order to harmonize efforts, prevent resources from being wasted and avoid improvisation and amateurism.

This coordination must take place, within the framework of the United Nations system, between operational organizations and specialized agencies, under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and in close cooperation with the Government of the country affected.

In this connection, we wish to express our support for the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. The five objectives the Department has set itself in the framework of its activities for this year and the next are, we believe, priority matters. The establishment of a framework for coordination between the activities of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is a step in the right direction towards intensifying and coordinating the activities of all parties concerned.

With regard to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, Tunisia believes that its resources should be increased and maintained at a high enough level to enable it to respond effectively to emergency appeals.

This can strengthen its operations, increase its efficiency and enable it to respond effectively to disasters and other situations in which it is called upon to intervene.

In this context, we believe that the international community must take into account the long-term rehabilitation and development needs of the affected country from the very outset of an emergency situation or of a disaster. This approach can strengthen national capacities, mitigate the effects of disasters and prevent their recurrence.

This continuum of emergency relief and development, envisaged by the United Nations in this framework, is relevant to today's circumstance, in particular in the countries of Africa. In fact, over the past decade, conflicts and emergency situations have proliferated in Africa, causing suffering to the peoples, bringing about a loss of social and economic gains, and undermining the foundations of development. They have also increased the flows of refugees and of displaced persons. Hence, considerable financial and human resources must be diverted to emergency relief.

The United Nations system should, in these conditions: support efforts to prevent emergency situations; promote development; provide for continuity between the phase of relief and that of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development; and, lastly, help the affected countries to provide themselves with early-warning and emergency-action systems.

In this context, we reaffirm our support for the initiative of the Government of Argentina, which should lead to the creation of a volunteer corps, termed the "White Helmets". Tunisia, which supports this initiative, and which it co-sponsored from the very outset, believes that it can contribute to mitigating the effects of disasters and that it can help the affected country in the reconstruction stage.

The Argentine initiative is all the more timely because it advocates a global approach aimed at supporting humanitarian- assistance activities and at facilitating the transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The "White Helmets" will also make it possible to strengthen South-South cooperation in this field and will, by the same token, enhance the capacities and resources of the United Nations, with a view to responding speedily to situations of instability that are proliferating in the world.

In this framework, Tunisia is prepared to associate itself fully with the Argentine initiative, in the hope that it will take concrete form under United Nations auspices.

Mr. Eteffa (Ethiopia): The Ethiopian delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his illuminating report (A/50/203 and A/50/203/Add.1), drawn from field experience, on the strengthening of coordination of emergency humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

It is a sad reality that the global need for humanitarian emergency assistance is more urgent today than it has ever been. This urgency is not decreasing, but increasing. Coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance is essential to solve the problems of handling humanitarian intervention. However, unless humanitarian assistance includes addressing the root causes of emergencies by working with all actors, lasting solutions cannot be found. Finding lasting solutions would involve, among other things, United Nations humanitarian agencies working together with other organizations and recipient countries in addressing real sources of conflicts.

Ethnic conflicts and civil strife and their devastating effects are only symptoms; the actual causes are unjust relationships of communities and abject poverty. These problems should be addressed in the spirit that abject poverty and injustice anywhere are threats to justice and affluence everywhere. This approach is in compliance with universal human values and humanitarian norms. Humanitarian organizations, civil societies and international non-governmental organizations should work with local organizations to monitor the violation of humanitarian norms. The present report of the Secretary-General notes:

> "One of the most glaring deficiencies in the overall response of the international community is the general lack of support for strengthening indigenous capacities and local mechanisms to cope throughout a crisis. Yet the strength of these local mechanisms is a major determinant in the struggle of affected communities to recover." *(A/50/203, para. 161)*

War and civil strife lead to increased calls for immense humanitarian assistance, making it difficult to play effective roles in appropriately implementing existing policies of coordination. In seeking a durable solution, the international community has to address at least two fundamental aims: first, to help the affected community through rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction after the initial response to emergencies; and, secondly, to find workable mechanisms for addressing the underlying causes of conflicts.

In this connection, from the report under consideration we note with concern that donor countries are not so eager to contribute generously to rehabilitation and recovery as they normally do to immediate emergency requirements; especially as related to non-food items, the response of the international community is not promising. This is understandable because the initial stages of an emergency invoke more compassion than rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction.

We appeal to donor communities and humanitarian agencies to pay serious attention to the process of finding a durable solution subsequent to their initial response to emergencies. However, transition from emergency to recovery and rehabilitation is difficult to define, so we have to address it as a package in a continuum.

We need to find a much more effective way of meeting our humanitarian goals in complex emergencies in terms of material and human resources, as well as strategies. And we need to do so with a heightened sense of urgency. Our capacity to respond quickly and effectively has enormous implications for saving human lives — not just in the short-term, but for the very prevention of future conflicts and for the prompt alleviation of tensions.

It would be appropriate to understand that unresolved humanitarian problems directly affect political stability and can potentially manifest themselves later as far worse humanitarian crises by increasing enormously the magnitude of humanitarian emergency needs.

Therefore, preventive diplomacy has a key role to play in humanitarian affairs. It is also time for us to recognize that taking responsibility for effective humanitarian response involves a joint four-way undertaking — by the United Nations, the donors, non-governmental organizations and the recipient countries. Unless they cooperate with one another effectively, the achievement of a positive impact will be elusive. In this respect, we note with satisfaction the cooperative efforts being made by all actors to help the victims of natural disasters and ethnic conflicts.

We are pleased to note that, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182 in December 1991, the coordination of United Nations humanitarian emergency assistance has been further strengthened and that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has played a pivotal role. In this regard, we would like to express our deeply felt appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Peter Hansen, for his commendable coordinating role — through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and with individual humanitarian agencies — and for helping in-country coordination. The work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the launching of the consolidated appeals have shown that the aforementioned General Assembly resolution has been essentially implemented. We are deeply appreciative of the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to monitor the implementation of the various resolutions.

We believe that all victims of disasters, whether natural or man-made, deserve to be assisted generously and on a timely basis by the international community in the spirit of humanitarianism and concern for the plight of our fellow human beings. In coordinating the activities of humanitarian assistance, we are encouraged by the efforts of all concerned in trying to abide by the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality set out in the resolution. The provision of humanitarian assistance must be based on the needs of the affected population. The alleviation of human suffering should be the sole criterion for humanitarian intervention.

Handling the problems involved in the complex humanitarian emergencies we are facing today requires new tools, techniques and strategies. The development of concrete and effective ways of strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance deserves particular attention. This would definitely involve, among other things, the challenges of establishing appropriate priorities in coping with emergency situations. In this regard, the efforts made to strengthen preparedness for responding to emergency situations seem promising, and we encourage the continuation of efforts to enhance preparedness.

Financial strength is one important means of strengthening coordination and preparedness to face up to these challenges. Resolution 46/182 provides for the establishment of a Central Emergency Revolving Fund of $50 million to ensure sufficient assistance in the initial stage of emergency. This is an important tool for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to use in strengthening coordination. In view of the use of the Fund over the past years, we believe that its total size is too small to respond adequately or meaningfully to the increasing demand to save lives during the early stages of an emergency. We therefore think that further practical measures should be taken to strengthen the funding process in the interests of an immediate and timely

response. We endorse the recommendation that a separate window with an additional $30 million be opened within the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to act as a catalyst.

We believe that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is doing a very difficult job extremely well within its means, and we feel strongly that it should be properly equipped with human and material resources for the formidable task of coordinating assistance for humanitarian emergencies. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should continue improving its structure and strategies on the basis of experience in the field. We must close the gaps and eliminate any overlap in mandates that could lead to duplication in responding to emergencies; a clear line of authority is needed.

In conclusion, as far as natural disasters are concerned, the international community needs to encourage and fund scientific research and technology so that occurrences can be reliably predicted and adequate and appropriate preparations made. Until then, however, the task facing the United Nations is that of making full use of the existing humanitarian instruments in order to effectively address the challenges posed by complex emergencies and natural disasters. The further strengthening of these mechanisms must be part of the constant efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the United Nations. This would involve the commitment, collective leadership and dedication of all actors.

At present, we have no option but to be prepared to respond effectively to humanitarian crises and to follow them up with peacemaking, reconciliation and the political settlement of conflicts. Communities that are having difficulties should be encouraged and helped to create environments conducive to addressing root causes, which in turn would lead to harmonious relationships between the peoples in question. Humanitarian intervention should be only a prelude to political settlement. The basis of political settlement should be justice, equality and democracy.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/6 of 16 October 1990, I now call on the observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Küng (International Committee of the Red Cross: On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), I welcome this opportunity to share our views and concerns regarding humanitarian operations and coordination in emergency situations.

Most current conflicts have little in common with classic warfare organized into a structured chain of political and military command. Present conflict situations are far less clear-cut and hostilities are often spurred by the abundant supply and easy availability of small arms, land-mines and other weapons. The sometimes complete collapse of any form of authority except that which issues from the barrel of a gun and the flouting of the most basic human values have rendered conflict situations in the last few years much more complex. As a result, the plight of civilians is more agonizing and humanitarian workers are exposed to increasing security risks.

Often there is a lack of will, commitment, responsibility or consensus among political powers. Where political forces are absent or withdraw, the chances are that other actors will step in, and this may lead to a "privatization of warfare" without any clear ideological foundation.

Fortunately, there also is hope. We are particularly encouraged by recent positive developments in southern Africa, where efforts to create a climate of peace and stability appear to be succeeding. In some of the former Soviet Republics as well, we sense a growing spirit of reconciliation. There is also reason to hope that the peace accord negotiated for the former Yugoslavia will put an end to four years of horrible suffering and immense loss of life.

In certain conflicts today humanitarian action appears to provide a welcome sense of purpose and an excuse for States to evade their political responsibilities. Conversely, there have been attempts to use humanitarian assistance to bolster or add credibility to political or military designs.

Let us remember that humanitarian action does not set out to judge whether the causes for which belligerents have taken up arms are well founded or justified. Its sole purpose is to ensure that victims are assisted and protected. This is why the ICRC deems it vital that political or military action, including any action undertaken under the banner of the United Nations, must be conceived in such a way as not to erode the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian operations.

Considering the magnitude of the humanitarian work to be accomplished, concerted humanitarian action is of paramount importance and the further strengthening of humanitarian coordination is an obvious necessity in

order to prevent the duplication of efforts and, thus, to achieve greater effectiveness.

Two separate aspects of this coordination effort, in which the Department for Humanitarian Affairs plays an important role, merit closer consideration.

First, the establishment of coordination mechanisms, which we consider a welcome and positive development. The standing invitation to attend Inter-Agency Standing Committee and related meetings allows the ICRC to explain its perspective, to voice its opinions on humanitarian issues and to share information on its operations. At field level, it contributes actively to inter-agency coordination efforts and supports arrangements designed to take into account rapidly changing circumstances. A determining factor for the degree of ICRC involvement in these mechanisms is its independence, which it must preserve to perform its recognized role as a neutral humanitarian intermediary.

Generally, we feel that coordination mechanisms should remain as flexible as possible. They should not impede more essential operational duties. Nor should they slow down the decision-making process. Coordination efforts must serve the best interests of victims, avoiding a bureaucratization of humanitarian action.

Secondly, an extremely important part of coordination consists in harmonizing humanitarian approaches, respecting each other's duties and tasks and acting in a coherent manner. For the ICRC, it is crucial that the mandate and role which the international community has conferred on it be well understood and respected, not only by the parties to conflicts but also by Governments and by other humanitarian agencies.

A concerted humanitarian approach is particularly vital for the protection of vulnerable groups, whether they are internally displaced people, refugees or detainees. There are now a growing number of agencies involved in this field, acting on the basis of different bodies of law and concepts of protection. In the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, for example, the ICRC feels that great care must be taken not to hasten the return of refugees and displaced people under adverse material or psychological conditions and at a time when uncertainty prevails regarding their resettlement in safety and in dignity.

Another source of particular concern for the ICRC is the overlapping efforts and divergent approaches which have recently affected its detention-related activities in some places. Every year the ICRC visits tens of thousands of prisoners, and its experience and expertise in this area are recognized. What we wish to avoid is a situation in which the activities of other bodies hamper or complicate the discharge of our specific tasks in this field, a situation which we fear could be detrimental to the very detainees we are seeking to help.

A major challenge for humanitarian coordination, and one which merits special attention, is the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. The temptation remains strong among donors and humanitarian agencies to concentrate on the emergency phase without making proper provision for the rehabilitation and development phase. An acute underlying problem during the recovery process is land-mines, which continue to kill and maim thousands of innocent civilians long after the cessation of hostilities. The ICRC has recently increased its efforts to press for a total ban on these weapons.

Finally, I should like to touch briefly on the "White Helmet" initiative. We welcome the intention behind the initiative, and we believe that several aspects of the implementation phase require careful consideration and further study to ensure that this new mechanism will not duplicate the efforts of existing humanitarian bodies, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The grim reality of contemporary warfare is that more than 90 per cent of casualties are non-combatants, civilians who are often targeted because of their ethnic or religious affiliation. The enormous suffering caused by conflict situations is all too often a consequence of blatant disregard for international humanitarian law.

The obligation to respect and to ensure respect for humanitarian law should remain an absolute priority for States. Their commitment to this duty will be one of the principal goals of the forthcoming Twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which is to be held in Geneva in a week's time.

In addition to focusing on war victims and respect for international humanitarian law, it will deal with the principles of international humanitarian assistance and protection. The ICRC trusts that this important Conference will provide the 186 States party to the Geneva Conventions with the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. Such a commitment is

more necessary and timely than ever before and should thus contribute to the strengthening of effective humanitarian coordination.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Pedersen (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The past year has once again confronted the international community with challenges of an unprecedented nature, not only because of the number of disasters but also because of the increasingly complex nature of disaster situations and the resulting difficulties that humanitarian agencies have in discharging their functions.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/50/203 provides a comprehensive overview of the current complex, and often violent, context of humanitarian activities. It raises several issues that are of concern, including disrespect for humanitarian norms, the scourge of land-mines, rape as a war crime, added risk for relief workers, the impact of sanctions, and the limited means of humanitarian organizations for providing protection. These and other key topics will also be taken up by the twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which will convene in Geneva in early December this year.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with its 169 member National Societies, is working in the interests of the victims and the most vulnerable people in the world. It remains committed to the goals of international cooperation and coordination, but is also bound by its fundamental principles.

We need, therefore, to ensure that collaborative arrangements do not threaten, or are not perceived to threaten, the independence of action, the neutrality and the impartiality of our organization or of its member National Societies.

In our view, the key to improved coordination of humanitarian response at the international level lies in timely information- sharing, effective planning, accountability and transparency. This needs to include donors, international agencies, local organizations, and their beneficiaries. Equally important are common standards for humanitarian response, shared by all those concerned. In this regard, we wish to highlight the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief, which seeks to promote and safeguard standards of behaviour.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, for its part, has also established a set of principles and rules for Red Cross disaster relief, which seeks to regulate a number of aspects of international humanitarian response within the Movement.

On the practical level, the International Federation has further developed its capacity to take action in crises through the establishment of so-called emergency response units, which combine technical equipment, personnel and training, as well as procedures and managerial structures, to make possible the rapid mobilization of the resources of its member National Societies and to ensure consistency.

I should like to comment briefly on the "White Helmet" initiative, referred to in document A/50/542.

We note that there has been a rapid increase in international assistance to mass populations fleeing violence and economic or social collapse, and we believe that, unfortunately, this trend will continue. In providing technical assistance in these types of operations, "White Helmet" volunteers will need to be aware of, and adapt their training and practice to, a number of trends.

The growing degree of violence and fear associated with relief operations calls for the highest standards from relief workers. Individual workers must be committed to the principles of neutrality, impartiality and needs-driven assistance. They must be trained and experienced in how to carry these skills through to their everyday behaviour in the field.

A further trend in relief today is towards longer and longer interventions. Relief workers should be able to travel back and stay with the returning population to assist with the initial stages of rehabilitation, and thus require comparatively long contract periods. We should also keep in mind the important developmental role of relief workers, which requires suitable training of personnel in this aspect of their work.

Last but not least, all disaster-affected populations include people with skills and knowledge who can assist in relief and rehabilitation. Relief work should build on

local capacities of people and organizations. While welcoming all initiatives that recognize the growing humanitarian needs around the world and seek to address them, the International Federation is concerned that appropriate standards of professionalism be developed and practised, and that all relief programmes should seek to build on local capacities, rather than displacing them inadvertently. Furthermore, these initiatives must be based on a comprehensive understanding and analysis of existing institutional infrastructures such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The President took the Chair.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/203), action taken by the international community to end oppression or bring about change by non-military means can have major ramifications for those who are already victimized by inequitable political and economic structures. Economic sanctions hit the poor hardest and can have a deleterious impact on the work of the humanitarian organizations.

In its 1995 *World Disasters Report*, the International Federation has highlighted, *inter alia*, our growing concern over the humanitarian impact of sanctions. After several years of sanctions against Iraq, for example, the high price paid by the most vulnerable groups of the population is apparent. At the very least — as called for in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace — a formal mechanism needs to be set up to assess the potential impact of sanctions and monitor their effects. We also need to ensure effective delivery of adequate humanitarian assistance to those most in need. Furthermore, we strongly believe that the humanitarian impact of sanctions could be mitigated by exempting United Nations and other well-established humanitarian organizations, such as the International Federation, and by facilitating their work in the field.

In conclusion, the international community needs urgently to exert renewed determination and efforts to address the root causes of crises. We realize the difficulties in addressing these issues, but believe that this should make us even more determined to utilize, through effective coordination, our collective resources to meet the challenges.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.23, entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

Before we proceed to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, owing to an inadvertent error, the name of Tunisia was not included in the original list of sponsors of the draft resolution appearing in document A/50/L.23.

I should like to announce also that since the introduction of the draft resolution the following countries have become co-sponsors: Cameroon, El Salvador, Israel, New Zealand and Ukraine.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.23?

Draft resolution A/50/L.23 was adopted (resolution 50/19).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 154?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to remind members that the Assembly will consider the two remaining aspects of sub-item (b) as well as sub-item (d) of agenda item 20 at a later date to be announced.

Action on draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 20 will also be taken at a later date to be announced.

In this connection, I should like to remind members, as announced in today's *Journal*, that the next meeting of the informal consultations conducted by Ambassador Sucharipa of Austria on draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 20 will be held on Thursday, 30 November 1995, at 3.30 p.m. in Conference Room 6.

Agenda item 11

Report of the Security Council (A/50/2)

The President: I call on the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Salim Bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman), President of the Security Council: I am honoured to have this opportunity, as President of the Security Council, to address the General Assembly at this historic fiftieth session in order to introduce the annual report of the Council, covering the period from 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995, in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the United Nations Charter.

It goes without saying that the members of the Security Council attach great importance to the timely preparation and submission of the annual report to the General Assembly. In presenting it, I have sought to follow the practice established over the last two years: after the draft of this annual report was issued to States Members, it was adopted at a public meeting of the Security Council on Monday, 13 November 1995. This is a tradition which was begun by the Permanent Representative of Brazil in 1993.

The consideration of the Council's report by the General Assembly constitutes an important occasion for substantive dialogue and interaction between these two principle organs of the United Nations, not just on the nature of the report, but also on the substance of the matters before the Security Council. This dialogue is a true indication of the importance of the General Assembly as the universal body representing the larger membership of the United Nations — a body which is entitled, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, to discuss and consider not only the work of the Security Council, but also the work of all other organs of the United Nations.

Yet again, the report reflects the continued heavy workload of the Council in responding to problems related to the maintenance of international peace and security. As the report notes, during the period under consideration the Council held 152 formal meetings, adopted 70 resolutions and agreed upon 82 statements by the President. In addition, the Council members held 274 consultations of the whole, totalling some 420 hours, an increase over the figure for the preceding 12-month period.

The members of the Security Council have listened carefully to the proposal made in the debate on the Council's report in this Hall in previous years and to the debates elsewhere in this Organization on how the work of the Council can be made transparent and accessible to non-members of the Council as well. The members of the Security Council recognize the value of such transparency for the full and rapid implementation of the Council's resolutions. In June 1993, the Council established an informal working group on documentation and other procedural matters. That working group has continued to meet regularly, and a number of further steps have been taken following recommendations by that group.

In December 1994, in response to a proposal made by France and after discussion in a formal meeting of the Council, the President announced that the Council intended to have increased recourse to open meetings, in particular, in the early stages of its consideration of a subject. This proposal aims at allowing the Security Council to hear the views of Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Council on issues that are of great importance to their countries. The Council would decide on a case-by-case basis whether to schedule public meetings of this nature, the first of which was held in January 1995 to examine the Secretary-General's report on his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace".

The briefings given by the Council presidency to non-members on the work of the Council, which were first undertaken in October 1994, have continued this year, and this is now an important and established practice.

In March 1995, following consideration in the working group on documentation and other procedural matters, the Council President announced that a number of improvements would be introduced to make the procedures of the sanctions Committees more transparent. These either have been put into practice or are in the process of being put into practice by the sanctions Committees.

There was also continued consideration this year in the Council of ways to enhance consultations and exchanges of information with troop-contributing countries regarding peace-keeping operations, including their planning, management and coordination, particularly when significant extensions of an operation's mandate are in prospect. Immediately after the presentation of last year's report on the Council to the General Assembly, on 4 November 1994, the then-President of the Council made a statement establishing new procedures for the consultation of and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries. These procedures, too, have now become an established practice, and thanks in this regard go to Argentina and New Zealand for having initiated this idea and seen it through.

Also, as part of the effort to improve the documentation of the Council and to make its work more accessible, the working group has been reviewing the list of matters of which the Council is seized. The process is an ongoing one. Items are removed only after extensive consideration and appropriate consultation. Neither the removal of a matter from the list nor its retention carries any implication for the substance of the matter. But the exercise is a necessary one of rationalization.

As indicated in its introduction, the Security Council report is not intended as a substitute for the official records of the Security Council, which provide a more substantive account of its deliberations.

The members of the Security Council will, I am sure, listen attentively to the debate we are holding here today and to the ideas raised and the comments made. They welcome this opportunity for a substantive dialogue with non-members of the Council and are ready, individually and collectively, to work with the members of the General Assembly for the attainment of the high goals and aspirations set 50 years ago.

The President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 5 p.m. today. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to place their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The delegation of Ukraine would like to express its gratitude to the President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Salim Bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby, for his brief, precise and at the same time informative statement introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

Our delegation has thoroughly studied that voluminous document. Our attention is drawn to its improved structure, its clear statement of the results of the Council's consideration of the issues before it and the reference materials it contains, set out with precision and in a way that is convenient for the reader. We cannot but note that this year the report includes a summary of the main trends in the activities of the Council's subsidiary bodies, in particular the various committees on sanctions.

Having analysed Security Council activities during the period under review, we cannot but admit that the Council has undertaken considerable efforts aimed at improving the forms and methods of its work, at enhancing its transparency and at including as many Member States as possible in the process of discussing important problems. The delegation of Ukraine welcomes the practice of carrying out extensive exchanges of views at official meetings on the most important issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, a practice which is being constantly refined by the Council. The de facto practice of systematic consultations between the members of the Security Council and the countries contributing troops to United Nations peace-keeping operations deserves our appreciation. The regular briefings given by representatives of the delegations serving as Presidents of the Security Council are of considerable assistance in providing information. Our delegation expresses the hope that all of these positive changes will be institutionalized in the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

In our opinion, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provided a good opportunity to make the Security Council's report to the General Assembly a special one, differing somewhat from a mere statistical reference book. We had expected members of the Security Council to take the opportunity — and the liberty — to draw some general conclusions on the activities of the Security Council during the past half century. Regrettably, we failed to find in the jubilee report of the Security Council the answer to the simple, and at the same time difficult, question of the role of the Security Council in establishing new international relations and its contribution to the creation of a new architecture for the world order. In this connection, we cannot but be surprised by the fact that when the question of the future of the Security Council is being discussed within the framework of the General Assembly, the Security Council itself seems to stand aloof and to show no interest in this problem.

It is no secret that the future of the activities of our Organization with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security is first of all to be seen in the light of preventive diplomacy. Most Member States have supported with enthusiasm the position paper of the Secretary-General, a Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace". It should be noted that the Security Council has taken the role of leader in the consideration of this item. All of us remember the thorough and profound debates held in the Council last January.

Yet the results of that discussion arouse disappointment. Instead of substantive discussion of the proposals and initiatives submitted by Member States and the formation of concrete, clear-cut recommendations to the Secretary-General, the Security Council has limited itself to the most general comments, laid out in a statement by the President of the Security Council. In this connection, the delegation of Ukraine calls upon the Security Council to return once again to the problem of United Nations peacemaking activities and to an analysis of their principal mechanisms with a view to devising specific and, most important, effective recommendations.

As one of the issues through which the Security Council could resume its consideration of United Nations peacemaking activities, Ukraine suggests the issue of establishing United Nations trusteeship over the process of the establishment of new States and of the restoration of democracy in countries with totalitarian regimes, in order to make the use of force inadmissible and ensure adherence to established norms of international law. The disintegration of the USSR, Czechoslovakia and the former Yugoslavia, and the restoration of democracy in Haiti and a number of other States present extensive material on which to ponder.

We cannot but be concerned about the Security Council actually withdrawing from the performance of its functions under Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation of Ukraine believes that during its consultations the Security Council must at least once every six months consider the problems of limitation of the arms race and disarmament. In this context, Ukraine welcomes the attempt by Argentina to draw the attention of the Security Council members to the problem of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Justified criticism by Member States is aroused by the way in which they are informed of the activities of the committees on sanctions, as well as by the very process of sanctions review. Sanctions, imposed on behalf of all of Members of the United Nations, infringe upon the economic and other concerns of many countries. In this context, review of those sanctions must be of a public character.

In this connection, we propose that consideration be given to the possibility of publishing the summary records of the Security Council's consultations of the whole. That would enable the States Members of the United Nations to orient themselves clearly in respect of the motives and reasons behind action, or lack of action, on the part of the Security Council.

The delegation of Ukraine also repeats its proposal that a Security Council bulletin, including an account of the positions of the States members of the Council concerning the issues under consideration, be published monthly.

Here, I wish to make two further remarks. It is very important that States Members of the United Nations be informed of the holding of official meetings of the Security Council. This being the case, we propose that there be a fixed period of time between the decision to hold a meeting and the actual convening of the meeting, to enable the relevant Departments of the Secretariat to notify at least the interested delegations.

In view of the prevailing financial crisis, we regard it as unnatural that the United Nations should incur enormous expense in connection with the publication of military and technical information that are sent to Member States practically every day in thousands of copies. We suggest that a list of such documents be published weekly, together with notification of the time and the Secretariat location at which delegations might familiarize themselves with them. The economic benefits of such a simple arrangement are obvious.

It is no mere chance that the activities of the Security Council are at the centre of United Nations Member States' attention. The well-being and prosperity of all members of the international community depend, in the end, on the Council's decisions. In this connection, I hope that all States members of the Security Council — present and future — will always remember that it is the United Nations Members that

> "confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council." —

and I underline the following words —

> "acts on their behalf."

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom, as a permanent member of the Security Council, welcomes this opportunity to consider in the General Assembly the annual report of the Security

Council. The Permanent Representative of Oman — this month's President of the Security Council — has already spoken eloquently on behalf of members of the Council. This debate provides a useful occasion to consider the manner in which the Council carries out its Charter responsibilities and the way in which it keeps the wider membership informed of what it does on their behalf.

The British delegation believes that it is important that we pay close attention to the working methods of the Council in order to secure the greatest possible transparency consistent with the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council. I should like to focus my comments on three of the transparency measures undertaken by the Council over the last year.

First, there is the work of the sanctions Committees. We all recognize the need of delegations to be kept informed of the work of these Committees — a need that is especially pressing for those whose companies may have applications pending before them. In March of this year, following a British initiative, the Council President therefore announced a number of measures to make the work of the sanctions Committees more transparent. These measures included the following: the practice of issuing press releases after meetings of the Committees would be increased; the status of communication lists under the "No objection" procedure prepared by the Secretariat would be made available to any delegation that wished to have a copy; a list of all other decisions by each active Committee would be prepared by the Secretariat, on a regular basis, and would be made available to any delegation that requested it; and an annual report to the Security Council would be prepared by each Committee.

It was also decided to include in the introduction to the Council's annual report to the Assembly more information about each Committee than has previously been provided. The result of this decision is reflected in the much fuller treatment given to the Committees in the report now before the Assembly. We shall continue to examine the work of the sanctions Committees to see if there are other ways in which their procedures might be improved.

Secondly, there is the question of the meetings held between troop contributors, the Secretariat and members of the Security Council. The arrangements established by the presidential statement of 4 November 1994 represented a considerable step forward, and one which the United Kingdom warmly welcomed. But the arrangements must be made to work better than they do at present. They must be more than an opportunity for the Secretariat to brief on developments in operations. They should be the occasion for a serious discussion between troop contributors and members of the Council on the mandates of the peace-keeping operations in which the men and women of those countries serve.

Those discussions should inform the work of the Council. To that end, Council members should be represented at those meetings, at a suitably senior level, and the Council President should report back to the Council, as is envisaged in the arrangements. As my Czech colleague, Ambassador Kovanda, said in his address to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee two weeks ago, these consultations should be seen not as a chore but as a source of wisdom and as a relevant input into the formulation of mandates.

Finally, more use should be made — as the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Alain Juppé, suggested at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly — of open meetings of the Security Council, particularly at an early stage of its consideration of a subject. This was a welcome reminder, and, in the British delegation's view, greater attention should be paid to it.

The Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters must continue its efforts to find ways to enhance the transparency and efficiency of the Council's work through — among other measures — improvements to the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. The process of organic, evolutionary change must continue. For its part, the British delegation will be listening carefully to the comments made and the ideas raised here today as we seek to take that process forward. We will seek to take them into account as we prepare for the United Kingdom's presidency of the Security Council in January 1996.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing the Indonesian delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Salim Bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby of Oman, President of the Security Council for the month of November, for having introduced on behalf of the Council the report (A/50/2) of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995. As a member of the Security Council, my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the President of the Council. We should also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the

Secretariat for the hard work they put into the preparation of this report.

My delegation is gratified to note that the consideration of the Security Council's report by the General Assembly this year is a continuation of the established practice initiated three years ago, providing once again an opportunity to engage in the necessary interaction and substantive dialogue between the two principal organs of the United Nations in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter. This fundamental constitutional requirement for interaction and dialogue between the General Assembly and the Security Council has, in our view, become all the more important in view of the greatly expanded work and the ever-increasing responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. Needless to say, such dialogue and interaction are bound to support and strengthen the roles of both the General Assembly and the Security Council in discharging their respective mandates.

More importantly, however, it is my delegation's considered view that the holding of such a debate is a significant occasion that highlights the accountability of the Security Council to the General Assembly, as provided in Article 24, paragraph 1, wherein the Members of the United Nations

> "confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf",

and serves to achieve a better balance between the role of the Council and that of the other principal organs of the United Nations.

The views of my delegation with regard to the ongoing endeavours to reform and improve certain structures and procedures of the United Nations, including those of the Security Council, have already been presented on many previous occasions. Indonesia, along with the other non-aligned countries, has consistently emphasized that if the United Nations is to become a fully effective central instrument in a new and revitalized international order, reflecting the new realities of the international situation, it should be based on and truly reflect the democratic spirit of equality, equity and transparency, in representation as well as in the decision-making processes. As a logical consequence, therefore, the Security Council should also undergo a process of review and revitalization to ensure its dynamic adaptation to the evolving realities, so that it may continue to play an effective role as the body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as for the peaceful settlement of disputes and crises, and so that it may respond to the need for full democracy and transparency in its work to reflect the current configuration of the membership.

It is in this context that my delegation views this year's report of the Security Council now before us. In considering the report, I wish to recall that during previous debates in this Hall and elsewhere in this Organization the overwhelming majority of the members of the international community have expressed the hope that the report might contain an evaluation of the issues considered by the Council and a detailed account of the work of its special committees. While we are cognizant of the disclaimer that the Security Council's report is not intended to be a substitute for the official records of the Council, but is, rather, a reference guide to its work, the fundamental deficiency of the report is that it remains merely a compendium of documents and resolutions and a listing of the decisions and actions taken by the Council on the many issues that have been brought before it.

We readily acknowledge that some of the legitimate demands made on the Council have already been responded to by its members and have already been reflected in the present report. We welcome the Council's decisions in March 1995 to make the procedures of the sanctions committees more transparent, decisions which have now been implemented, or are in the course of being implemented. The holding of direct consultations between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries on the establishment and conduct of peace-keeping operations has now become an established practice, particularly when significant extensions are due. The regular briefings on the work of the Council provided by the Council presidency to non-members are another important measure intended to enhance transparency. Furthermore, as an effort to improve the accessibility of the Council's documentation, draft resolutions in their provisional form, as well as the tentative monthly forecasts of the Council's programme of work, have been made available to all Member States. All of these measures are clear manifestations of the positive trends towards greater transparency in the work of the Council, which my delegation fully supports and which must be encouraged. Moreover, we have also maintained the call for an increased number of both

formal and informal meetings prior to the adoption of decisions, thereby allowing for the wider participation of non-members. Thus, the proposal made by France to have increased recourse to open meetings, thereby allowing the Council to hear the views of non-members, is, in our opinion, a step in the right direction.

Notwithstanding these welcome improvements, however, it cannot be denied that the report indeed reflects the heavy workload of the Council. But, despite its voluminous nature, the report regrettably remains basically a descriptive compilation of the numerous communications addressed to the Security Council and the decisions adopted by it. Its format has not drastically changed, nor has it been transformed into a document of substance commensurate with the greatly expanded role of the Council. It is the considered view of my delegation that the annual report of the Council, as mandated by Article 24 of the Charter, must be more than a mere description of activities and a reproduction of resolutions already known; rather, it should contain analyses and assessments of the decisions taken on the various issues in order to meet the need for greater clarity and understanding of the Council's reasoning and motives in adopting them. It is therefore imperative that the provisions of Article 15, paragraph 1, of the Charter pertaining to special reports of the Council should also be faithfully observed.

In this regard, my delegation fully endorses the decision contained in the Final Document of the Eleventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Cartagena, Colombia, in which it welcomed the actions taken by the Council with regard to its transparency and working methods. However, it considered them still insufficient and therefore urged the General Assembly to recommend to the Council further measures to ensure its full democratization.

With the firm conviction that the United Nations is the universal embodiment of multilateralism, providing the appropriate framework for effective cooperation and democratic dialogue among States, my delegation intends to continue to participate constructively in the process of revitalization, restructuring and democratization of the United Nations aimed at bringing about greater transparency in the work of all its bodies. Similarly, during our remaining period in the Security Council, Indonesia, together with the other members of the Security Council, will continue to work towards the further improvement of the presentation of the Security Council report to the General Assembly so that it may become a true instrument of interaction between these two principal organs. This, in our opinion, can be achieved only if the report is made more substantive and more analytical. To this end, my delegation is presently in the process of undertaking consultations with Member States. My delegation remains hopeful that through intensified dialogue and interaction, together we will be able to make the necessary improvements.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that increasing the degree of transparency and keeping the non-members informed about the Security Council's decisions would not only enhance its credibility, but would also bolster the legitimacy of those very decisions and thus improve the prospects of their implementation.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): The Austrian delegation appreciates the fact that the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly was again introduced by the current president of the Council, who this month is the Permanent Representative of Oman. This follow-up to the initiative taken by the delegation of Brazil in October 1993, and then by the delegation of the United Kingdom in 1994, can be seen as a contribution to enhancing — pursuant to and in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter — the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

By presenting the report, the presidency, on behalf of the members of the Security Council, demonstrates awareness of the Council's particular position *vis-à-vis* the General Assembly, as well as the readiness to enter into a dialogue with the Assembly. However, in our view, this particular position calls not only for rendering an account of the work accomplished but — even more — for increased interaction, wherever appropriate, between the members and non-members of the Council at an early stage of the decision-making process. An adequate flow of information towards non-members will allow them to understand better how the Security Council deals with political situations, and should therefore be continuously facilitated. A certain balance between useful confidentiality of Security Council consultations and necessary transparency has to be established.

Delegations with a special interest in particular situations dealt with by the Security Council should have the opportunity to offer their views at an early stage of the decision-making process. This applies especially to countries which are particularly concerned by a given conflict or to countries which, due to their geographic location, will have a specific role to assume in the course of operations mandated or authorized by Security Council decisions.

The Austrian delegation wholeheartedly welcomes the significant improvements introduced by the Council in the last year or so with a view to better access to information, including greater transparency in the work of the sanctions committee, as has just been outlined by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom. These and other steps certainly constitute a positive side-effect of the ongoing discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council and should be carried on. In this context, we are looking forward to future meetings of the Working Group, which, hopefully, will provide us with further ideas on an improvement of the working methods and the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly.

Today we repeat our view that, since the discussion on the enlargement of the Security Council meets with some obvious difficulties, the immediate need for greater legitimacy of the Security Council would require that greater attention be given to so-called Cluster II issues, with a view to further strengthening the transparency and the working methods of the Council.

Austria attaches special importance to a substantial dialogue in the field of peace-keeping operations. The current mechanism for interaction between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributors, which is the — although limited — result of a most valuable initiative launched by Argentina and New Zealand, should be further strengthened. Efforts on both sides — Security Council members and non-members — will be called for in this context. To ensure the necessary commitment of Member States via public support both for ongoing and possible new operations, especially in the light of the important number of operations and with growing constraints in available resources, we feel that in any case the procedures set out in the presidential statement in document S/PRST/1994/62 should be fully implemented.

A higher degree of interaction leading to Security Council decisions which better reflect the views of the whole membership could be reached by, *inter alia*, implementing the valuable initiative launched by France to hold orientation meetings. This initiative, introduced a year ago, seems to have fallen into oblivion after, I think, two trial runs, and I am glad that today we have all heard the statement of the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, calling for its revival.

A real opinion-building process, guaranteeing input by the membership at large, should be based on a triangular exchange of views and interaction between the members and non-members of the Council, as well as the Secretariat. The views expressed during the orientation debates would then have to be considered in the following decision-making processes. A better interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly might assist Member States to better identify themselves with decisions taken by the Council. This would lead to a higher authority of the Council and make its decisions more effective.

Let me express my delegation's appreciation again for the work accomplished by the Security Council during the period under consideration. Last year's packed agenda reflects the ever- increasing challenges, which were, without doubt, subject to serious political considerations.

Let me, however, as I did last year, add a note of caution. There has to be concern about the ever-growing number of Security Council resolutions and presidential statements, bringing with it the danger of depreciation of their value and a certain tendency towards micro-management. In the interest of the authority of the Council, some restraint might, therefore, be appropriate.

The Austrian delegation was among those that last year made suggestions on the possible format of future reports of the Security Council to the General Assembly, including the possibility of monthly reports, which could then easily be put together to form the yearly report of the Security Council, without adding too much to the work load of the Secretariat.

In our view, the report as it is contains first and foremost an accurate listing of official documents issued by the Security Council during the period under consideration, and as such it is certainly a most helpful tool for delegations and — maybe even more so — for students of current history.

The value of the report would certainly be enhanced by the addition of some analyses of the negotiation processes and consultations that have led to particular decisions. We are, of course, fully aware of the potential difficulties involved. However, a more analytical report on the work of the Security Council would certainly contribute to its transparency as well as to the promotion of the interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly to which I have referred. It might therefore be worth the additional effort that would have to be devoted to it.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): Let me begin by thanking Ambassador Al-Khussaiby of Oman for his substantive presentation of the report of the Security Council covering the period from 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995. We are glad to note that this practice of the President of the Council presenting the report, which was inaugurated by my own delegation in 1993 and continued by the delegation of the United Kingdom in 1994, is in the process of becoming a tradition. We welcome this trend as a positive contribution to enhancing the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, in line with the growing interest of the membership at large in the Council's activities.

The consideration by the General Assembly of the report of the Security Council provides the States Members of the United Nations with a valuable opportunity to participate in the discussions on the work of an organ which retains a central role in the Organization's overall mandate. As the Security Council's intensified activity generates increased interest, the call for better and more thorough reporting is leading to some improvements that deserve recognition. But, although the rationalization of the Security Council's documentation and other procedures have contributed to increased transparency, it is clear that further progress is still necessary.

In the period under review, the number of formal Council meetings remained at approximately the same level as that of the previous year. Document A/50/2 is a useful reference guide to those meetings. The same cannot be said, however, with respect to the informal consultations of the whole, which took up 420 hours during the 12 months under consideration, against a figure of 353 hours for the previous 12-month period. The bulk of the Council's activity is increasingly being concentrated in such informal meetings, the contents of which reach the general membership only through voluntary briefings by delegations or by the President of the Council.

As the disproportion grows between the number of formal and the number of informal meetings, States that are not members of the Security Council continue to face difficulties in their efforts to keep abreast of events.

The widespread support for greater recourse to open meetings of the Council, expressed by all who took part in the debate on 6 December 1994 promoted by the delegation of France, and acknowledged in the presidential statement adopted on that occasion, has yet to be translated into more identifiable results. A productive exchange did occur in February this year with regard to the Secretary-General's "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace", but on other questions of great interest to the Organization there has been no similar opportunity. If the flow of information between the members of the Council and other Member States is indeed a shared objective, open debates should be held more frequently.

Communication between members and non-members is of particular importance as regards decisions on peace-keeping operations. With the increase in the number and complexity of such operations, their political and financial repercussions have acquired greater importance for Member States. Arrangements for consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries, on the basis of the procedures outlined in the presidential statement of 4 November 1994, have to a certain degree improved the quality and speed of the flow of information available. But such arrangements need to be re-examined in the light of experience.

A more institutionalized mechanism for consultation between the Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries on peace-keeping operations is in the interests of all concerned. With more regular and clearly defined meetings involving such actors, cohesion among them in all United Nations peace-keeping efforts will be strengthened, while their action in the field will become more effective.

This year's annual report purports to make the procedures of the sanctions Committees more transparent, in line with a Council decision that determined that the introduction of the report should contain more information about each Committee's activities. While there seems to be a laudable disposition on the part of the Council to make the work of the sanctions Committees less opaque to non-members, the measures taken so far fall short of what is expected. As discussions at present under way in the context of the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace have indicated, there is no disagreement over the need for greater transparency in this field. However, the Note by the President of the Council of 29 March 1995 (S/1995/234) has yet to be more fully and satisfactorily implemented.

The post-cold-war environment has led to the more frequent imposition of sanctions than was the case during the Organization's first 45 years. Their effectiveness depends on action by individual Member States, which must incorporate them into their legal systems. Strict observance of sanctions regimes will tend to be

reinforced by more readily available information from those in charge of implementing the relevant resolutions and decisions on sanctions.

It is natural, on the other hand, that, given the often high political and economic costs to specific States of observing certain sanctions regimes, they be entitled to follow closely deliberations affecting such regimes and that their views be taken into account through appropriate procedures. Concern over the situation of vulnerable populations should also find adequate channels to be legitimately voiced and, hopefully, heard.

The fact that legally binding decisions, such as the extension of sanctions regimes, are being taken in informal consultations of the Security Council remains an anomaly. The Working Group on Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council should continue to examine questions such as these in the context of the so-called cluster II list of items, which pertain to the organization and working methods of the Council. Discussions in that forum have already contributed to the introduction of some improvement in the methods and procedures of the Council and will undoubtedly continue to help raise the general level of awareness as regards the enhancement of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Brazil's term of office as a non-permanent member of the Security Council expired in the sixth month covered by the report. The perspective afforded by hindsight has not affected our commitment to the fundamental principles that oriented our participation in the Security Council during the biennium 1993 to 1994. Among these, I would highlight the permanent search for the peaceful and negotiated settlement of disputes, with the rule of law in international relations being observed and due respect being paid to the principles of non-intervention and of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

We continue to believe that the United Nations plays an irreplaceable role in the safeguarding of international peace and security, and we are in favour of a strong and representative Security Council capable of fulfilling its responsibilities with authority and legitimacy. Quickly changing international circumstances in the past half-decade have placed new challenges before the Security Council. While some have been successfully dealt with, in other instances the Council has had to face criticism in the midst of frustration.

The long and violent conflict in the Balkans left United Nations peace-keepers exposed to situations of combat for which they were not prepared. The unwillingness of the parties to compromise raised the level of exasperation of the international community progressively, while the Security Council remained, at best, an informed observer of a process over which it exerted only marginal influence. While we warmly welcome the Peace Agreement initialled last week in Dayton, Ohio, we would underline, at the same time, the importance of preserving the Council's role in situations in which international peace and security are clearly at stake.

With the rise in the number of cases where enforcement action is delegated by the Council to third parties, care should be taken that there are adequate mechanisms to ensure the desirable accountability of such endeavours. We remain convinced, on the other hand, that the competence of the Council should not be extended to matters not directly linked to the maintenance of international peace and security. Exceptional, ad hoc initiatives may seem an attractive option as an immediate response to lawlessness and criminal acts against humanity. But we should remain aware of the Security Council's limitations in the judicial field and favour only solutions which rest on a strong legal basis.

The Council's agenda comprises, to a great extent, situations of unrest in developing countries. We are encouraged by the progress achieved in southern Africa and Central America. Brazil has been participating in United Nations peace-keeping efforts in those regions and will continue to play its part in contributing to consolidating the advances that have been made.

As these fragile economies grapple with crises that destabilize them internally and negatively affect regional security, they suffer tremendous setbacks in their efforts to overcome underdevelopment. The unanimous acceptance of the linkage between peace and development should lead to greater sensitivity with regard to the acute problems faced by the countries emerging from economically and socially devastating conflicts in the third world.

The Secretary-General has pointed out on various occasions that peace-keeping operations, along with their military component, also help to reconstruct and reorganize strife-ridden countries through activities such as de-mining and road-building. The significance of such activities should not be underestimated. As experience is

gained in halting the proliferation of conflicts in the post-cold-war environment, however, increasing attention should be given to economic development in the context both of preventive diplomacy and of post-conflict peace-building.

In concluding, we wish to reiterate our support for the promotion of an intensified exchange between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The examination of the Security Council's annual report by the General Assembly remains, first and foremost, a fulfilment of the Charter's provisions. But as the general membership's interest and involvement in the Organization's activities in the field of peace and security expands, this occasion can become an increasingly useful opportunity for a comprehensive debate on the work of the Council.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): Two weeks ago, the Security Council presented its fiftieth annual report to the General Assembly. If one were to compare this most recent report to the first one, submitted half a century ago, I am sure one would be struck by the dramatic expansion of the Council's role and activities in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly since the end of the cold war.

In recent years, the Security Council has been meeting almost on a daily basis to review the many and pressing issues on its agenda; to assess situations in various parts of the world that might pose a threat to peace; and to undertake a range of actions to monitor cease-fires, prevent conflicts and limit their spread; to resolve disputes; and to enforce peace once a conflict has been settled.

Japan has always supported such efforts of the Security Council and is determined to contribute to its work. As the importance of the Council increases, and as international expectations of it continue to grow, the need to strengthen its functioning by enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness has become all the more urgent. My delegation has reiterated on various occasions that restructuring the Council and improving the manner in which it conducts its work are two elements which, together, should form the basis of an overall package of reform. Japan sincerely hopes that agreement will be reached on both elements by the end of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, in September 1996.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council was the focus of an extensive debate on this same item at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and again last March at the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group for the reform of the Security Council. Many Member States expressed their views on the broad range of issues related to the way in which the Council works. The Council, for its part, has improved the flow of information and the exchange of ideas between members of the Council and other Member States. It has also made it a practice to hold more frequent formal meetings, particularly at the earlier stages of its deliberations on a subject. In addition, it has begun holding orientation discussions and has institutionalized the practice of holding presidential briefing sessions for States which are not members of the Council. Japan considers all of these measures to be extremely helpful and strongly supports them.

Nevertheless, there still remains much room for improvement as far as transparency in the Council's work is concerned. Japan continues to believe that there are three areas in particular which deserve careful consideration. The first is the provision of information by the Security Council to non-members, the second is a mechanism to permit the opinions of non-members to be reflected in the deliberations and decisions of the Council and the third concerns the need for better coordination between the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly.

First, with respect to the provision of information to States which are not Council members, we believe that the situation has significantly improved as a result of several measures adopted by the Council. In particular, I should like to single out for commendation the regular briefings on the Council's informal meetings for non-members by the President of the Council. Having said that, however, I also feel obliged to note the recent regrettable tendency towards less frequent briefings. Japan would like to request that the Security Council briefings be conducted on a daily basis. We would also like to suggest once again that papers distributed to Council members in the informal consultations also be made available more systematically to non-members on the same day.

With regard to the second component — a mechanism to ensure that the views of non-members are reflected in the Council's deliberations and decisions — it would be useful if the Council devised an appropriate and practical mechanism to provide interested non-members with an opportunity to express their opinions. The Security Council has taken a significant step in this direction by holding trilateral consultations with countries contributing to peace-keeping operations

and the Secretariat on various aspects of such operations. This practice, too, however, has become rather nominal, as the time allotted for these consultations and the information provided to these countries are insufficient. We hope that these consultations will be further improved and institutionalized.

There is also a need for a mechanism designed to provide opportunities to non-member States which have a direct interest in a particular issue - such as States which are neighbours of the parties to a conflict - to convey their views to the Council. We believe this could best be pursued within a framework of small and informal meetings between those States and representatives of the Council. As for the position of countries which are third parties to a dispute but are seriously affected by economic sanctions imposed by the Security Council, Japan suggests that the Council undertake consideration of practical means of soliciting their views and assessing their difficulties. This, in turn, will activate discussions of this issue in other United Nations forums. We also welcome the various initiatives that have been taken to improve the transparency and efficiency of the sanctions Committees.

The third point I wish to comment on is the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The United Nations Charter, as we well know, places primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security upon the Security Council. However, within this basic framework, the work of the Council and the General Assembly should be organically coordinated with a view to enhancing their cooperation and complementarity. We believe there are many areas, such as preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace building, in which the two organs can play a complementary role.

Finally, allow me to comment briefly on the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. While the report in its present form has a certain value as a repository of factual information, including a list of resolutions adopted by the Council, I believe it would have greater value and usefulness, and would stimulate more effective deliberations in the General Assembly, if it contained substantive or analytical descriptions of the Council's activities.

In closing, I should like once again to express my delegation's appreciation of the fact that measures have been introduced to enhance the transparency of the Security Council's activities. We hope such efforts will continue, with due attention given to the need to maintain efficiency in the Council's work. Japan for its part will redouble its efforts to contribute to the important work of the Security Council.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): The report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is mandated in Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter which calls on the Council to:

> "submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration."

Furthermore, the General Assembly, by virtue of its resolution 2864 (XXVI), adopted in 1971, decided to seek the views of Member States on ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the Security Council in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter. The increasing number of speakers on the present agenda item testifies to the importance attached by delegations to the work and functioning of the Security Council.

After considering the report of the Security Council, the General Assembly customarily adopts a decision stating that "The General Assembly took note of the report of the Security Council". While recognizing that the Assembly has never expressed approval or disapproval of the report taken as a whole, we firmly believe that it has the power to examine and discuss very carefully any questions arising from matters contained in the Security Council reports. We would like to re-emphasize that the debate on this item is consistent with Article 10 of the Charter.

Article 10 of the Charter empowers the General Assembly to

> "discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter".

That scope includes every aspect of the Charter, everything contained in it and covered by it. The very fact that this Article has been put at the beginning of the enumeration of the powers of the Assembly underscores the importance to be attached to it. It is the key to the entire role of the General Assembly in the United Nations. The General Assembly has thereby been designated as the global forum and indeed the conscience of the world.

Having studied the report of the Council as contained in document A/50/2, the Malaysian delegation would like to make the following observations:

First, while there have been some changes, the report, as in the past, is still a compendium of meetings and decisions, including a listing of communications and documentation received by the Council. The report, if not exhaustively examined in this Assembly, can remain merely perfunctory and a sheer waste of paper and resources of the Organization. While it would have been ideal to receive an analytical and substantive report, for instance in the format of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, Malaysia recognizes that the latter report is from the head of the Secretariat. Malaysia believes that this agenda item provides an excellent opportunity for the general membership to pronounce itself on the work of the Security Council as reflected in this report.

In this regard, the Malaysian delegation wishes to refer to chapter 24 of the report, dealing with the issue of security assurances. Malaysia was one of those countries which participated in the Security Council debate on 11 April 1995 preceding the adoption of resolution 984 (1995). Together with other countries, including Egypt, Malaysia supported Indonesia, which, speaking in its capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, emphasized that the five declarations by the five nuclear Powers varied in terms of structure and content, as well as remaining devoid of any legal force. We underlined that the situation called for an internationally negotiated, legally binding instrument whereby all the nuclear-weapon States would be obligated to apply the same provisions and meet the same conditions.

The Council resolution clearly did not enjoy the support of the larger membership. As was the case of the Secretary General's "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace", the General Assembly, especially the First Committee should have first considered the issue.

Secondly, it is necessary to raise here the financial implications of the decisions of the Security Council, particularly those pertaining to peace-keeping operations. It is a standard practice to refer any draft resolution with likely financial implications to the ACABQ before the General Assembly takes a decision. Yet in the case of the Security Council no such procedure exists and the Fifth Committee addresses the budget of these operations only after the Council has taken a decision. Financial responsibility and accountability have to be applied to the Security Council as well. As we address various aspects of the reform of the United Nations, we need to set in train a specific process to hold the Council accountable

Thirdly, while welcoming the inclusion of the information on the activities of the sanctions Committees in the report, we think that the information provided is superficial and lacking in depth. It merely indicates the number of meetings held. In this regard, we believe that the report should have a separate chapter to comprehensively reflect the activities and decisions of each of the sanctions Committees. While we recognize that the press releases prepared by the Department of Public Information on the informal consultations of the sanctions Committees have been quite useful, they have no official status. We therefore would like to see what transpired in the informal meetings of the sanctions Committees reflected in the next annual report of the Security Council.

Fourthly, my delegation is perplexed by the procedure adopted by the Security Council at the end of August of this year when it took a decision on an item relating to the strength of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO). It may be recalled that the Council, in conveying its decision, decided to send a letter, contained in document S/1995/748, from the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General. We find this procedure odd and believe it is inconsistent with the normal practice of the Council, where decisions are normally taken in the form of resolutions, especially on issues relating to the mandate and strength of a particular United Nations peace-keeping operation. The procedure adopted by the Council in August therefore requires explanation. We would like to know the basis of the decision pertaining to such a procedure. Is it to be assumed that the President's letter has a status equal to that of a resolution of the Council? If so, we think the Council has set a dangerous precedent.

Fifthly, my delegation insists that the Assembly deserves to be fully informed of the practice regarding the circulation of communications from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), a State which has yet to be admitted as a Member of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation shares the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Croatia and the Chargé d'affaires of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their letters addressed to the Secretary-General and contained in documents A/50/545 and A/50/656 respectively, in which they stated their strong objection

to the publication and circulation as documents of the United Nations of any documents from the so-called Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia. In the light of Security Council resolution 777 (1992) and General Assembly resolution 47/1, my delegation would like to know on what basis the decision was taken to have them circulated as United Nations documents. Who decides in this regard? Is it the Secretary-General or the Security Council?

Sixthly, while recognizing that there have been some positive changes with regard to the work and working procedures of the Council, as reflected in its various decisions, we believe that more could be done. We hope that the Council, in the near future, will be able to adopt and institutionalize other measures necessary to bring about more transparency and democracy in its work and decision-making processes. This is important to ensure that the decisions of the Council would enjoy the full support of the general membership. In this regard, my delegation shares the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/50/1) on the work of the Organization, in which he emphasized that

> "only if the decisions of the Security Council enjoy the full support of the international community ... can the Council fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter to maintain and consolidate international peace and security." *(A/50/1, para. 50)*

Admittedly, this Assembly itself must be further revitalized to fulfil its Charter-mandated functions. This revitalization must include a serious and in-depth examination of the workings and decisions of the Security Council. My delegation looks forward to working with other delegations in ensuring that the opportunity presented during the consideration of this agenda item is not squandered.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation believes that the annual report of the Security Council reflects in a fairly accurate manner the efforts made by the Council in the period from 1994 to 1995 in maintaining international peace and security. In the past year, there has been a growing trend towards the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiations. The Council, which shoulders the heavy responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has played a useful role in easing regional conflicts and promoting the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

As the report notes, during the period under consideration the Council held 274 consultations of the whole and 152 formal meetings, adopted 70 resolutions and issued 82 presidential statements, an increase on the figures for the preceding 12-month period, all of which are concrete expressions of the collective efforts of the Council. At the same time, the Council has adopted some new measures to make its work more transparent, with improved results achieved. I believe that these efforts by the Council will be welcomed by Member States.

The Chinese delegation has listened attentively to previous speakers. We welcome the free expression of views on the improvement of the Council's working methods and its transparency, to facilitate future discussion of these questions. We are of the view that the Council, as the main United Nations body with responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, should act on behalf of all Member States. First, the Council should develop a democratic style of work; establish the practice of democratic consultation; listen to the views of its members and the general membership; refrain from imposing the will of one country, or a few countries, on others; and refrain from adopting the arrogant attitude of "take it or leave it". Secondly, the Council should pay equal attention to all hot spots and refrain from applying double standards to conflicts in different regions. Thirdly, United Nations bodies, with their own terms of reference, should each attend to its own duties. The Council should not exceed its functions and meddle in the affairs of other bodies. Lastly, the Council, while ensuring its effectiveness and efficiency, should further increase the transparency of its work and strengthen its exchange of information and communication with the General Assembly and non-Council members, particularly the countries concerned. Only this can help enhance the accuracy, effectiveness and authority of its decision-making.

The Council shoulders heavy responsibilities. China, as a permanent member of the Council, sincerely hopes that it will take advantage of the occasion when the General Assembly considers its work to pool the wisdom of the general membership and earnestly assess past experience, so as to fulfil the mandates entrusted to it by the Charter in a more effective manner and continue to play a positive role in maintaining international peace and security, thus ensuring more stability and tranquillity, fewer conflicts and less turbulence in this world.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would like at the outset to express its thanks to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Salim Bin Mohammed Al-Khussaiby, for his introduction to the report of the Council for the period 16 June 1994 to 15 June 1995. My delegation is also pleased that this year the report was again adopted at a public meeting of the Council.

The Security Council has, as in recent years, produced a voluminous report, reflecting the considerable increase in its activities. Freed from the constraints of the cold war, the Council can now consider without ideological preconceptions situations that are potential threats to international peace and security. The list of the Council's activities is impressive, judging from the number of resolutions and presidential statements adopted and the considerable amount of time devoted to informal consultations. More important, the report notes that most of the decisions of the Council were adopted by consensus. Thus, out of 70 resolutions adopted during the period covered by the report, only 13 were adopted by a vote that was not unanimous, and two draft resolutions were defeated because of the use of the veto.

This trend is certainly positive, in so far as it indicates that the Council is no longer an arena for ideological confrontation and a forum for the expression of bloc polemics, which in the past did so much harm to the Council's cohesion and effectiveness.

I cannot fail to mention as one of the positive aspects of the report this year that its format is more attractive than in the past and that the lay-out of the different chapters makes the report easier to read. None the less, all of these positive aspects cannot conceal the fact that the report this year does not differ in its contents from that of past years. This report is really a recapitulation and enumeration of the Council's activities during the period concerned. In fact, as the authors of the report themselves say, it is simply

> "a guide to the activities of the Security Council during the period covered." (*A/50/2, Introduction, p. 19*)

During the debate on this same item during the forty-ninth session, many of us put forward constructive criticisms regarding the Council's reports. Our remarks referred both to the substance of the reports and to the Council's working procedures. Simple proposals were made to redress the situation. In most cases, taking those proposals into account did not require complex or special measures to implement them. Since the Council has not adopted most of the proposals in question, our remarks remain fully valid, as well as our insistence on the presentation of substantive reports that respond to the purposes specified in articles 15 and 24 of the United Nations Charter.

The debates on the report of the Security Council offer a unique opportunity to Member States to express their views not only on the Council's activities but also on the way in which this organ discharges the prerogatives assigned to it by the United Nations Charter. The interest that this debate has aroused among Member States in recent years can be explained by the central place that the Security Council now occupies in the functioning of the Organization, although this does not mean that sufficient attention has been given to the need for an increased involvement by the General Assembly, in terms of guidance, encouragement, monitoring and support of the Council's action.

Accordingly, the conception and content of the Security Council's reports to the General Assembly are valuable indicators for gauging the degree of respect for the fragile and imperfect balances established by the United Nations Charter among the different principal organs of the United Nations. Moreover, these reports shed light on the overall institutional evolution towards the objective of democratization of the United Nations. Thus the constitutional requirement for the submission of Security Council reports cannot be reduced to a mere added formality, since the reports are intended to help the General Assembly carry out its own political responsibilities in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security, the two principal organs being jointly responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Assembly through its overall authority and the Security Council at the operational level.

In the light of these considerations, it must be said that this year's report does not make it possible for the General Assembly, and beyond it, the Member States on whose behalf the Council acts, to be fully associated with the activities undertaken in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as with their evaluation in the light of the goals and principles of the Charter and taking into account all other relevant data. Here I should like to point out that the technical difficulties that are usually invoked to justify the present approach to the reports are not insurmountable, as attested to by the simple and reasonable ideas developed

in the framework of the General Assembly's Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. Likewise, provided the political will exists, an in-depth examination of the questions contained in the report of the Council recommended in General Assembly resolution 48/264 is both possible and desirable and useful. Furthermore, the submission of special reports as envisaged by the Charter and briefings organized on the initiative of the President of the General Assembly or jointly with the Secretariat's technical and documentation support, can in our view promote a healthy and productive relationship between the two principal organs and would certainly deserve to be put into practice.

The Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly should be a yardstick to measure the progress made in improving transparency in the work and in the decision-making process. In this respect, we must note the lack of new initiatives in the direction of greater transparency and greater democratization, as well as the rapid waning of the consultation mechanisms, which now seem to be showing all their limitations. Likewise, implementation of the commitment to have greater recourse to open meetings — in accordance, incidentally, with the Council's provisional rules of procedure — is being unduly delayed.

As regards sanctions, the report sacrifices analysis to a descriptive and functional approach that does not do justice to a question that is increasingly drawing the attention of the entire international community.

In addition, the report is silent on the possible results of the Security Council's cooperation with the regional organizations in the current process aimed at tapping the potential for complementarity. In view of the hopes placed in this type of cooperation, lessons should be drawn from current experiences such as that of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), through which the Security Council is supervising a process leading to a referendum of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara organized by the United Nations in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Processes that involve other forms of cooperation are under way in other parts of the world, and it would be good for the annual report of the Council to present an evaluation of them from both a political and a practical standpoint.

Through these comments and suggestions, which join those of other delegations, the members of the Security Council are aware of the interest we take in their activities and our expectations of them. It is to be hoped that the report to be submitted to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly will show a qualitative evolution and that it will attain the level needed to foster a fruitful dialogue underpinned by the contractual relationship enshrined in article 24 of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Allow me at the outset to associate my delegation with what has been said today by the President of the Security Council, the permanent representative of Oman, Ambassador Al-Khussaiby. In addition to his remarks I want to say the following.

We welcome the presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. This year's report, like the report last year, is again extensive and has been extremely work-intensive in its compilation. It reflects the vast agenda that the Council had to deal with between June 1994 and June 1995.

The report is an informative document that takes account of all the Council's activities. In our view, however, more analytic elements in addition to the presentation of facts might have given the report more substance. We also hope that future reports will better reflect Council members' own views of their work and indicate in which areas differences of opinion existed. We feel that the general membership would thus be in a position to evaluate more accurately the action taken by the Council during the reporting period.

None the less, the report in its present form represents, in our opinion, an important step towards more transparency, which is of vital interest to the overall credibility and thus also to the effectiveness of the Council. More and better information about what the Council does and why the Council does it is in our opinion a crucial element for reform of the Security Council.

During our presidency of the Council in June this year we tried as much as possible to take into account the general membership's need for information. We attach the highest importance to transparency and to the free flow of information. We therefore briefed non-members of the Council on the Council's work on a daily basis. We believe this to be a necessary and most fruitful exercise not only for the general membership but also for Security Council members themselves. We will continue to support efforts to further develop mechanisms for an increased and improved flow of information between Council members and non-members.

The Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council distributed their compendium of observations and assessment in document A/49/965. It is a most valuable document. In last year's statement we indicated that we supported many of the ideas contained in the observations on Cluster II which aim at enhancing the Council's transparency and its working methods. Some of these have been implemented by the Council since then. Others still need to be adopted.

The section of the present report dealing with the activities of the various sanctions committees reflects the decision of the Council in March 1995 to provide more information on each of the sanctions committees. More information will help make the procedures of the committees more transparent. As Chairman of one of those committees, I welcome this improvement. It is a step in the right direction.

We reaffirm Germany's support of proposals aiming at an enhanced dialogue between the Council and the general membership. A larger number of open meetings would allow the Security Council to hear the views of Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Security Council on a case-by-case basis.

Equally, we support better coordination between the Council and troop-contributing countries, as initiated by Argentina and New Zealand. New procedures for consultations and exchanges of information with troop-contributing countries, as presented in last year's report of the Council to the General Assembly, have in the meantime become an established practice.

Improving the transparency and openness of the Council is an essential element of Security Council reform. The report of the Open-ended Working Group, the compendium of observations and the assessment of the Vice-Chairmen confirm this, as do a large number of the statements delivered by Heads of delegation during the general debate and during the Special Commemorative Meeting marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization. Member States consider expansion of the Security Council and improvement of the transparency of the Council's activities to be of equal importance and to be parts of one overall package. This point of view has always been shared by my country. Only by increasing the Council's transparency and by facilitating the flow of information between the Council and non-members of the Council can we reassure the general membership that its views are adequately represented in the Council.

Germany once again welcomes the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The present report reflects the Council's awareness of the need to achieve greater transparency in its work. I remain confident that further measures will be taken in this direction. If the Council wants to remain credible, non-members and members of the Council alike will have to continue to work in this direction. I am hopeful that many of the constructive suggestions made by Member States in the past will contribute to that end. They are an integral part of the reform package aimed at making the Council more transparent, more credible and better able to maintain peace and security.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.